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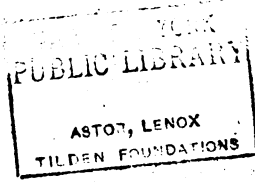
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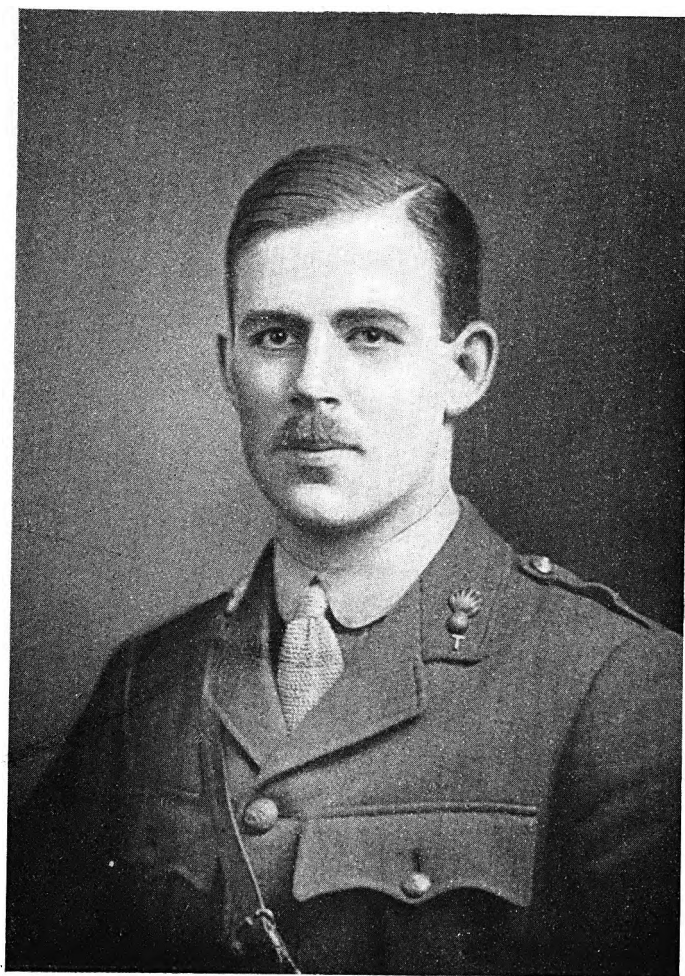
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NOËL ROSS AND HIS WORK





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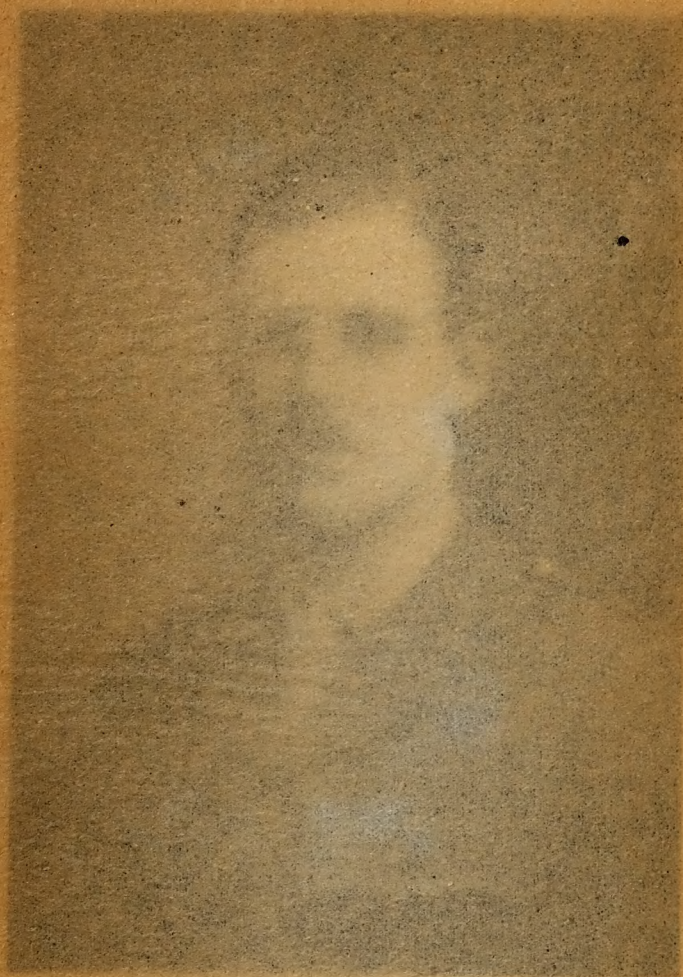
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LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD

1919

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"Yet will we keep, who cannot else repay
The dearest gift that Love has power to give,
For them the first place in our thoughts to-day—
Our dead, through whom we live."

OWEN SEAMAN.

to
EILEEN

21X-70

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Of the sketches in this book, "The Landing," "St. Paul's and the Abbey," "Playing the Bye," "London Ghosts," "The Home of my Fathers," "Men of the Glen," "Golfers from the Sea," "The Battle Cruisers," "Building the Warships," "The Grand Fleet," "The Old Inn," "Heard at Sea," "The Funeral of Richard Lloyd," "A Goodly Heritage," and "Finding a Friend," originally appeared in *The Times*.

"Abdul: an Appreciation," "Benevolent Neutrality," "The Grist House," and "The Ribbon," were first published in *Punch*.

The Editors are indebted to the proprietors of *The Times* and *Punch* for permission to reprint these.

They also wish to record their indebtedness to Mr. Lewis A. Northend of *The Times* Literary Staff for his kindness in correcting the proof sheets of the book.

LONDON,

August 31, 1919.

FOREWORD

By SIR IAN HAMILTON

IN boyhood the creature of genius gives to those of his friends who possess any secondary power of vision the impression that someone triumphantly different has leaped from the pit on to the boards. Instinctively, without an effort, he gets there, but, dazzled by the footlights, stared out of countenance by thousands of eyes, he becomes stage-struck, he hesitates. Then comes a period when the Fates, still probably retaining the feminine shapes given to them by the Ancients, decide whether this particular atom, which happens to have in it the elements of fame, shall "train on" or whether it shall fall back into the stalls, where, as like to one another as split peas, sit the prisoners of Convention. During that period our actor in embryo is striving, with what skill, pertinacity and courage God has given him, to recover his balance. He wants to go on; he feels instinctively that he has something of great importance to deliver, yet there are so many ways of doing so! Ten to one he lays hold of the tail of the nearest comet and begins to follow Heaven knows whom. Perhaps he loses his way in space; perhaps after trying prunes and prisms, isms and isms, cubes and classics, the man recovers

himself, chucks the "school of thought," braves the rotten eggs, and fulfils his destiny!

The galley proofs before me now are too slender proof to enable me to convince those who never knew Noël Ross that he would have set his mark upon literature. Most of the articles were written for *Punch* or for *The Times*, and the newspaper effect is produced by repetition. An article hardly aims at carrying the national intellect by storm; it is just one hand-grenade amongst thousands flung out of a camouflaged trench in the course of the conflict of ideas. Luckily there are several things in the book which are built on a different plan, and have, I firmly believe, a right to live on and lighten our way for many years to come.

"Finding a Friend" is a flawless and exquisite gem. One step farther, the prose would have flowered into poetry—and the effect, the unique effect, would have evaporated.

"Abdul," in lighter vein, is specially interesting to me as it shows that Noël Ross's charm—the winning way he had with him—was a human and not merely a social attribute: "The last I saw of Abdul was as I drove away in the ambulance. A pathetic figure in a white robe stood out on the balcony and mopped his eyes with his cotton cap."

"The Landing" was seen by me at the same hour and date as it was seen by Noël Ross, and I jotted down on the spot a breathless story of my own. Therefore, perhaps I may be more of a judge of this piece than of the others. I say it is the truth, and nothing but the truth. Not "the whole truth." That is a legal

figment. Except in the two forms "Yes" and "No," the whole truth does not exist. Give three people each so many cartloads of bricks, the bricks being the facts: tell them to render you the tale of those bricks in due season. With identical material one builds a lighthouse, another lines a well, and the third can't put the darned things into any shape at all. So, although our stories are different, the facts were the same; and although the whole truth is humanly speaking an absurdity, "The Landing" contains, the reader may take it from me, nothing but the truth.

The pieces I have mentioned are, I submit, remarkable, yet, when all is said and done, the schoolboy letters go one better. There is no father or mother in the Empire who would not be proud to get like letters from their sons. There are no schoolmasters or schoolboys in the kingdom who will not rise the wiser from their perusal. Truth, courage, loyalty, generosity, shine steadily behind the humour and the literary quality. These letters are revelations of fine qualities in conflict. "The Head" is a great man: "He didn't jaw us any more, but he told us he wouldn't speak to Jenny, as 'she had done the best for us.'"

Oh dear, oh dear, possibly I am prejudiced; possibly I do them an injustice, but I do not readily imagine the average "Heads" of our British schools taking that line with kind-hearted, early-rising little Jenny—"Joan of Arc, Spud called her." This New Zealand Head knew how to handle high-spirited boys and heroines of the dustbin; that's a fact. Noël Ross also comes out trumps in this tremendous scene:

“ Altogether I am convinced the Head’s a sport.” So he was, but it takes a sport to recognize a sport.

As to the “ ripping affair ” Gainsford hired from the saddler for threepence, we all live and learn, and I frankly confess that, in despite of being steadily thrashed every Monday morning of midsummer term except the first Monday, so that, always, I was striped like a zebra when I stripped at the bathing lake, I never heard before of a false bottom except in connection with a ship.

I could say a great deal about the personality of Noël Ross, but I am discouraged by the thought of how far short of the reality any appreciation of mine would carry the reader who had never seen him. Also I was fond of the boy, and personal feeling is best not paraded in public. My hope is that Reviewers and Public will take off their spectacles and remember their own ardent boyhood or girlhood when they read these letters, and especially these schoolboy letters. Then a monument more enduring than bronze will have been raised to a splendid young New Zealander; then the Old Country will know something of a being who was the embodiment of sunlight. Like Apollo, he was fair to see. At dinner once in my house Noël Ross sat next a dame who had brought with her to the festival the mood of the dam of Romulus and Remus. This way, and that way, she snapped and snarled to the terror of my table. Before we got to coffee she was feeding out of his hand. The guests trembled, but he brought it off. It was the way he had with him.

I was saying I was too fond of the boy to be able to

write about what has been to me a tragedy. I will only say this, that I shall never forget the sad news coming in without a word of warning; the silver bowl, a wedding present destined for his happy future home, on the table before us at the moment, on the point of being sent off to Hampstead. So my wife tore up her letter of congratulation, and many radiant visions seemed to fall to earth with the fragments. Too well do we remember that little green door in the doll's house so tenderly described by his parents. It was locked, alas! the day we found our way there. All we could see were the small, duster-checked window-curtains and that baffling little green door.

The happy nest was deserted; the songbirds that stole the fruit had flown; and as for the Singer of life, our Singer, our friend, "and what fair dell or grove he sings in now"—that is to us unknown.

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NOËL ROSS AND HIS WORK

BIOGRAPHY

20 NOËL ROSS, the author of these sketches, was born in Dunedin, New Zealand, and educated at the Terrace School, Wellington, and Christ College, Christchurch. His father, Malcolm Ross, was the son of Highland parents, who had emigrated to the Colonies in the fifties; his mother, also of Scottish descent, came to New Zealand as a little girl with her parents. Noël was an only son. At a very early age he showed signs of great originality and versatility. Even before he had learnt to read he could declaim dramatic verse with the seriousness of a tragedian or act amusingly his own improvisations. The child grew into a handsome youth, who enjoyed his College life and all the more manly sports connected therewith, while he did not worry overmuch with his College tasks. The joy of life took firm hold of him, and always he was full of merriment and ready for any adventure such as most healthy schoolboys delight in. The prizes in English came to him without effort, mainly, perhaps, because the literary bent was an inheritance, and he delighted in reading the wholesome books of great authors. Kingsley, Stevenson, and Kipling especially appealed to him. "Westward Ho!" "Treasure Island," "Kim," and "The Jungle Books," he knew almost by heart.

His letters from College—often illustrated with his own drawings—were more than interesting and frequently brightened with a delightful gaiety. Early letters “from a boy at College” showed that he had the gifts both of pathos and humour, and marked him for a literary career. Some of these are included in this volume. A schoolfellow—a gallant comrade in arms and the son of a family noted in the history of New Zealand—wrote: “I always felt that at Christ College he stood out more than any boy there, and even in those days one recognized that there was no limit to the successes he might achieve. Of the truth of this after-events have given indubitable proof. And yet I feel that the successes he had gained would have been merely the prelude to far greater ones.”

On leaving College he joined the staff of a New Zealand newspaper, but, as neither originality nor humour was greatly encouraged in the editorial sanctum, he found little scope for his real abilities, and his best work, even in those days, did not reach the public.

Meantime the boy whom everyone liked grew into manhood. Tall and handsome, with a transparent frankness, a charming manner, and exceptionally brilliant conversational gifts, he made troops of friends, and seemed not to have a care in life. Yet underlying all this buoyancy of youth were depths that only those who knew him intimately could fathom. His ancestry had indeed left him as legacy the changing moods of the Highlander of whom John Buchan has said: “He alters like a clear pool to every

mood of the sky, so that the shallow observer might forget how deep the waters are."

A literary friend who knew him at this time, on hearing of his death, wrote from America:

"He had such a personality that one finds it hard to believe that he is no more. Life at present has such a drab and colourless setting that one's only relief from its monotony is on looking back on the days that were more pregnant with happiness. So it happened that on the very day on which I received news of Noël's death I had been thinking of an afternoon that I spent with him sitting by the Avon's side. We sat there until late afternoon discussing Wilde's position in the world of letters, and I remembered thinking at the time how cultivated was his critical faculty. I was amazed and bewildered at the new light he was able to throw upon the subject generally. But the greatest thing of all was that I came away marvelling at his brilliant conversational powers. I am not surprised that his work while he was on the editorial staff of *The Times* was thought so much of by such representative men as Kipling and Northcliffe. The memory of his brilliant achievements must help you at this sad time. The world is a much poorer place through the loss of Rupert Brooke, Donald Hankey, and Noël Ross."

In those days life under the bright skies of the Antipodes flowed smoothly enough with naught of adventure except what one went forth to seek. But one day came news of war, and with it, almost on the instant, a telegram to his parents asking sanction to lay aside the pen and take up the sword. Needless to say,

this permission was readily granted. It was not long before both father and son had left for the wars.

Noël Ross sailed with the main body of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force as a private in a Canterbury infantry battalion. He knew a good deal about artillery, and might have tried for a commission; but he was afraid that neither a place in the artillery nor a commission might have been immediately procurable, and that he might be left behind, so he decided to take his chances as an infantryman. He took part in the first skirmish with the Turks on the Suez Canal. Later, at the termination of that fateful Argo-voyage to Gallipoli, which, alas! lured so many of England's brilliant men to find a grave before their prime, came the famous landing at Anzac, and he was soon in the thick of the fighting. His battalion suffered severely. Many of his friends and College chums were killed or wounded. He himself was severely injured by a shell, and was found, lying unconscious outside a Turkish trench on the heights of Anzac, by two Australians, who got him down to the beach. The explosion had evidently blown him right out of the trench. When he recovered consciousness, he was, with almost a thousand others, many of them groaning with the pain of unattended wounds, on a transport in the *Ægean*. The few hospital ships that were there had been already filled, and were steaming with their mangled freight back to Egypt. This voyage, with lamentably few doctors and orderlies, and none of the conveniences of a hospital ship, was a nightmare to most of those who had to undertake it. Several times he lost consciousness, only

to wake up in pain; and once in the night time, when the engines ceased their throbbing, he, and those with him, listened in the strange silence to the ominous splash ! splash ! splash ! that mingled with the solemn tones of the padre committing to the deep the bodies of those brave men who had already succumbed to their wounds.

From Alexandria to Cairo there was the trying train journey, with the heat and the dust and the flies, and, at the end of it all, a cot in an Egyptian native hospital, for the other hospitals—even the improvised ones—were already full to overflowing. These were not pleasant memories, but even in such surroundings he did not fail to catch glimpses of humour such as that described in the story of “ Abdul ” in *Punch*, which brought him a personal letter from Sir Owen Seaman and a quaint note from a “ Tommy ” who had been similarly wounded. Here, too, from a bed of pain, he wrote to *The Times* that account of the Anzac landing, which the Editor, in a special head-note, referred to as the most graphic personal narrative of the event that had reached England.

* * * * *

While all this was happening, the father and mother were travelling toward the scenes of action in the old world, the former going as a War Correspondent to Gallipoli, the latter to London. At Port Said there were rumours of great slaughter on Gallipoli, but they could glean no news of the fate of their boy. An hour before the steamer was to sail for England a hospital ship poked her nose in at the entrance to the

Canal, and, from one of those on board, they were told that Noël had been wounded but was safe in Egypt. Next day the father, after vainly searching through seven hospitals, accidentally met his son, painfully limping, in a street near the Nile.

It was about a year after the outbreak of war that the boy, now discharged from the army, joined his mother in London, and though he limped and his arm was in a sling, his uniform war-worn, and his belongings all in a small canvas hold-all, his eyes were bright with anticipation and his heart uplifted with enthusiasm. London was grey, in a sullen mood; but as each landmark, known to him for years from his picture-books, loomed through the fog, the boy was blissfully content. He had come to the city of his dreams. It was not the homecoming that had been planned in those far-off happy days, for the father was at his post on Gallipoli, the mother had suffered agonies of anxiety while the boy had lain in an Eastern hospital, and England was fighting for her life. The shadow of war dimmed her radiance, but it only intensified her romance and her glory in the boyish eyes that had lost a little of their gaiety by looking at Death.

In London, as convalescence slowly gave way to health, he made efforts to rejoin the army, and eventually was accepted, but as fit only for home service. He was detailed for an artillery course at Shoeburyness, where he passed with credit, and, having gained a commission, was appointed to instruct officers, many far older than himself, in modern gunnery. It was a keen disappointment to him that he could not go out to the Western Front, but even in this light

work his wound unfitted him for service, and, to his great sorrow, he was again compelled by a Medical Board to relinquish his position.

There ensued a sad period of uncertainty and doubt, during which he often thought of endeavouring to enlist once more as a private in some other district where his medical history was unknown. From this, however, he was dissuaded, and it was not long before he secured a position on the editorial staff of *The Times*, the editor of which gave him a cordial welcome on account of articles he had already written for the great journal. With enthusiasm he entered upon this new work, and his writings quickly attracted the attention of Lord Northcliffe and of many readers of *The Times*. One of his first assignments was a bicycle meet, and next day there appeared "The Pilgrimage on Wheels." The average reporter would have written a very ordinary paragraph about such an event, but the young New Zealander succeeded in investing his subject with a quaint charm that seemed to have delighted not only old devotees of the wheel, but others besides. "The chief," with his unerring discrimination, noted the article. "I am glad," he wrote, "to find in these days of depleted organizations that we have a new writer in Mr. Ross. I do not know him, but he has an excellent style and much information. His account of 'The Pilgrimage on Wheels' this morning shows a deal of knowledge on an almost forgotten subject."

From now onward Noël Ross continued to do good work for *The Times*, with occasional incursions into the columns of *Punch*. He was given important

commissions, and was selected to represent *The Times* on the occasion of the first visit of British and Allied journalists to the Grand Fleet in war-time—a high honour for one so young and inexperienced in London journalism. The series of brilliant articles which he wrote under the somewhat severe restrictions of the censorship then prevailing amply justified his selection, gained him further kudos in high places, and made him many friends in the Fleet. He subsequently accompanied the King on his visit to the Grand Fleet and the great munition works.

Articles that, for some time now, had been appearing on the "Court Page" of *The Times* added to his reputation, and the Editor frequently received private letters from readers inquiring as to their authorship. Among the first to recognize the new hand were Lady Edward Cecil and Rudyard Kipling. The former sent, through a mutual friend, a kindly invitation to the author to spend a week-end at her charming country house at Bodiam, a visit that was a great delight to him, and of which he wrote with boyish enthusiasm:

"DEAR MATER,

"You will want to know what this place is like. Well, get your copy of Kipling's *Actions and Reactions* and read the first story, 'An Habitation Enforced.' The country is too wonderful for words, and the woods are greener than I have seen them anywhere. To-morrow Miss Kipling comes over for me in her two-seater car, and we go to their place for lunch. On Sunday they want to take me to Battle

Abbey. Could anyone have a more heavenly holiday? This house is just wonderful. Lady Edward has its whole history right back to Doomsday, and the great oak door has the date 1636 carved on it. It is the manor-house, and there are all the farms round about. We dine out of doors, and it is delightful.

“One thing that has interested me is that you can hear the sound of the guns in France. I ridiculed it before, but now I am convinced, for their separate detonations are clearly audible, and there is one window at the back of the house that shakes every time you hear a gun go off. It is far too frequent for the guns at Shoeburyness, and sometimes resolves itself into a series of kettledrum effects that is extraordinary. Lady Edward has known similar days before the big attacks when there has been a heavy bombardment, and to-day I can hear them rattling the window. I have been given a separate room in which I can work, and I have written that story about the old coachman. I have also been working at the articles Lord Northcliffe wants about the munition works; but I do not know how long I will keep it up, for the delights of being out of doors are too many, and I cannot write in the open, it distracts me too much.”

These were great days for the young author, and he was very happy. His visit to Bateman's and his meeting with Kipling was one of the great events in his brief life. He had read Kipling since he was a child, and now Kipling, whose own son had fallen

in the war, gallantly fighting, seemed to take this young New Zealander, full of the joy of life, to his heart. Noël wrote with enthusiasm of all this, telling how the great man wandered with him in the fields, pointing out to him where Puck met the fairies and a score of other places and things, and of how he had been reading aloud to his wife and daughter his (Noël's) articles in *The Times* and in *Punch*, not knowing who the author might be.

Kipling, he said, was like a boy, and, with an exuberance of youthful joy, got Noël to perform a Maori war-dance "that scared the simple labourers and set the cattle running." They sat in the meadows above the house, sat in the hay yet to be carted, looking over the woods of Dallington forest and Pook's Hill. Presently Kipling began to talk of Puck and "Rewards and Fairies."

"That is Pook's Hill there," he said, "and yonder, behind the beanfield, where you see that brighter green grass running into the trees, is where the Knight first met the children and where he told them afterwards of the joyous adventure."

The mill dam, the fairy ring, the hammer pond, Puck's oak, ash, and thorn, were all there. Kipling showed his wonderful knowledge of this most historic part of England, and talked with pride of the untouched Sussex woods, the Manor of Pevensey, and his own estate. Later, in the study, he gave the young New Zealander not only kindly praise but generous advice. He told him to be like the young colt who heard the galloping behind him and set himself to the race, and said that one day he would

be sitting in the chimney corner reading his (Noël's) stuff. Later Kipling recited an unpublished poem—"with that wonderful voice of his, and looking straight at me all the time."

Such talk from an author, whose works he knew from end to end, was enough to turn the head of a young journalist; but Noël's head was not easily turned. He had a modest appreciation of the ephemeral nature of the work he was then doing, but a firm resolve to do much better in the near future.

Delightful also were his visits to Cliveden. In that hospitable home of the Astors he was a welcome guest, and there he met from time to time many of the celebrated people of the day. In the Italian garden that lies below the terrace of the great house, overlooking one of the most exquisite views in rural England, it was that he came unexpectedly upon the grave of a friend and comrade, an incident that inspired that charming article "Finding a Friend" which appeared a day or two later in *The Times*, and which is reprinted in this volume.

His brief career on *The Times* was altogether happy. The men who worked on the staff of the great journal were a family in themselves, and met at lunch and dinner in the old dining-room in Printing House Square. There were men there who, in their own sphere in journalism, were supreme. For most of them Noël had the greatest admiration and for several a great affection. Since the war his own life had been a strange mixture of thrilling adventures and wonderful experiences, and these, coupled with life in the atmosphere of Printing House Square, would have been a

rich asset in days to come, when he would no doubt have been able to look back upon journalism as having been merely a stepping-stone to more important work.

To the old dining-room in Printing House Square, with his easy, genial manner, his merry wit, and bright talk, he came as a ray of sunshine at a gloomy time when the great journal had given up to the war many of the younger members of its staff, and when the fate of the whole Empire seemed to be uncertainly trembling in the balance. But his cheery optimism would never admit the possibility of ultimate defeat, and he thought the English people too prone to plunge themselves in the depths of despair. Thus, when news came of the first smash-through of the German line at Cambrai, he saw reason for rejoicing, and he it was who, affecting others with his enthusiasm, went out and persuaded the authorities to set the bells of London a-ringing. Those peals were, perhaps, somewhat premature, but they helped to instil a note of confidence in many a doubting mind, and they were prescient of the great victory and the ultimate rejoicings he so firmly believed in, but which, alas! he did not live to see or to describe. How delightfully he would have pictured them!

Now that he had settled down to work on *The Times*, his mother took a little house on the hill at Hampstead, and there the two lived a happy life, brightened still further by the brief visits of the father, home on leave, in those rare intervals when the New Zealanders were not fighting. Over the roof of this new home three centuries had passed, and the

quaint little inn next door was a place of story and romance, for there, in the turbulent times of the Restoration, the conspirators had met. The house stood on Holly Mount in a little curving road, a quiet backwater from the steep street that climbed to the Heath, cresting a rise above the older part of the town, which was reached from it by flights of stone steps. All the houses on Holly Mount were old, the youngest Georgian, tall, of red and purple brick, flat-faced, with many-paned windows and hospitable double doors. An erstwhile church—the oldest Wesleyan Church in England—stood on one side. Wesley himself had preached there, and now, after an interval of neglect and desolation, it had been turned into a studio. The little road was fascinatingly old-world, and one could easily picture beaux and belles of two centuries ago stepping, with much swaying of hoop petticoats and flourish of canes, down the shallow stone steps of the houses and pacing sedately along the cobbled street, taking the air, which even now jaded visitors from London declare is sweeter and fresher than elsewhere. All about were historic places. Adjoining the inn was the curving front of Romney's studio, and many lovely ladies must have climbed the hill to be immortalized there. And above all, curving its green arms about the old houses and rolling in wooded waves to the horizon, was the Heath, ever-changing and lovely always.

So the small house had a wondrous atmosphere of romance, and though little was known of its history, mother and son felt sure that it had often held an overflow of wit or conspiracy from next door. Who

knew what distinguished reveller, in those days of four-bottle men, might not have slept off his potations in the little white panelled parlour ?

Hollybush House, in its tall slenderness and with its three windows exactly alike and set one above the other, somewhat resembled a lighthouse. There had been another window once at the top, but it was now filled up with the same mellow-tinted brick as the walls and only its outlines remained. Probably, in the good old days when light and air were taxed, a thrifty tenant had closed it. On one side the house had a quaint addition—a small room whose flat roof was utilized as a garden, and brimmed over in summer time with vivid bloom. But the little green door was the most attractive feature. It was a glorious colour, and in perfect harmony with the soft greys and cream and russet of the walls. At the lower windows checked curtains fluttered—real blue and white duster cloth—over which London visitors clasped their hands in ecstatic admiration. The door was most important as well as most decorative, for the house had no other entrance, and the coalman had to carry his sacks through the little dining-room into the tiny scullery to empty them into the yard beyond. But little drawbacks like that did not disconcert the inmates—indeed, they were causes of infinite diversion; and a few sheets of *The Times* laid down circumspectly, and a cheery word and smile to the man, worked satisfactorily.

In bygone days the dining-room had been a kitchen, and its hall-mark—a range—still remained to gladden with its ruddy glow on a snowy morning.

On the wall by the window were war mementoes—water-colours of Gallipoli in which the English sunlight used to bring out strange effects of colour, German helmets, Prussian and Turkish bayonets, and, hanging over all, a little flag of red, white, and blue, with a pathetic history. One of the first British who entered Peronne after the Germans had fled from it noticed a flash of colour from the upper window of a ruined house. He climbed up and detached this flag, a strip of velvet apparently torn from a hat, a bit of white calico, and a band of blue linen, all hurriedly sewn together—a greeting to St. George who had come to slay the dragon. Along the white window-sill, between the blue and white checked curtains, stood flowering plants. Too often they “died on us,” but the joy of their colour and fragrance was an excuse for extravagance and a compensation for trouble. Just outside the window, which nearly always stood open, affording passers-by much pleasure, were two bay-trees in green wooden tubs guarded by a couple of posts with a hanging chain between. These made the house still more like a doll’s house, and were a source of delight to the children. As yet we have only stepped inside the dining-room of the little house, and even then nothing has been said of the really fine and very old Japanese prints, the red-tiled floor, the beautiful old gleaming table with its brass-shod curving feet and the brilliant array on the mantelshelf, where two meek spotted dogs stood side by side with Japanese teapots of exquisite peacock hues, and beyond them brass branched candlesticks flanked by gleaming shell-

cases from the Western Front. Such a curious *olla podrida* it was—old and modern Japanese, early English, Dutch, Bretagne, mingled with souvenirs of the Great War. A very large old lacquered tray, its roses and poppies as brilliant as they were half a century ago, stood on a ledge on the wall close by the door that led to the tiny kitchen where many war-time recipes were tried. On the other side of the passage, if the six feet of hall can be dignified by such a name, was the study lined with books. Most visitors unless warned fell into this room, for it was a foot lower than the hall. Apart from the books and a large oil painting, so stricken in years as to be cryptic, the most interesting thing in the room was a lovely Empire mirror, with much charm, though tarnished and dim and its decoration broken and discoloured.

A steep flight of steps led into the coal cellar. It was a sort of oubliette, and might have been used to great advantage in more lawless times. The cellar was supposed to constitute the last resort in a Zeppelin raid, but it required more courage to face the certain darkness and stuffiness and the probable rats than to meet the dangers above ground; and so, though the door was set ajar in case of the worst happening, refuge was never sought there.

The staircase curled to the top of the house, and the first floor was occupied by the parlour and—an evident after-thought—the bath-room. One could never decide whether the advantages of this unusual arrangement outweighed its disadvantages, but the novelty appealed tremendously to visitors. The

occupants rather prided themselves on their bath-room, for the stately Georgian houses opposite had none, and the poor vicar who boarded in one complained with deep melancholy that he had to cover his hip-bath over with his fur coat to keep the water warm until he was ready.

The roof-garden was a most attractive place, if somewhat limited as to area, but the only way to it was through the bath-room. To the roof-garden nervous visitors were piloted over the bath by means of a plank to the window-sill, whence a flight of steps led to the little platform made from the flat roof of the study, and surrounded by tall trellis-work on two sides. The open front framed the most wonderful view of old roof, exquisite in shape and colour. There were madder-purple, russet-red, and grey-green roofs, and close at hand, set among the spring-emerald of tall trees, some cream-washed gables so aged they sagged for very weariness. In front a very old house reared its side of delicious rose-red brick, splashed with bronze and ivory, and at its foot was a dado of pollard oaks, the boundary of a quaint garden. On one crooked gable a little iron man with a telescope swung in the wind, an ancient weathercock.

Beyond the wonderful huddle of Hampstead roofs lay London, lovely in the distance, and at times so clear that from the upper window the Tower Bridge was visible. At sunset it was a city of opal and gold, amethyst and pearl, against a rose-flecked sky. When the garden was in its full glory of summer, the exquisite distances were framed in flaming foam of nasturtium and broken by the stately purple spires of del-

phinium; but always, even when the trees were delicate etchings of sepia and the sky was sullen grey, there was charm in the view.

The little garden was loved, and it repaid the gardeners for their love. One of the first purchases was the New Zealand flag to fly from its trellis. It arrived one wet evening, when the Boy's foot was heard on the wire mat outside and a thump came at the door. Opening it, a radiant face was seen under a dripping hat, and above a pile of parcels, which included a flagpole and its fittings, a flag, a knife-cleaner, a large black bowl for floating flowers, and a big posy of anemones! By next morning the starry flag fluttered from the staff, to the open admiration and conjecture of passers-by, who could not place it, and came to the conclusion that it was "foreign."

Many a happy summer morning was spent in the sunshine there, pottering about among the tubs and boxes. Quickness of growth and vivid colour were preferred to strict usefulness, and so the dainty butterflies of sweet-peas fluttered round the trellis, nasturtiums spilt their red-gold glories over the wall, and French beans grew as in the time of Jack the Giant-killer, purely for æsthetic reasons; but parsley and herbs were there for the picking. The marrow that flourished so preposterously produced only one offspring, and it was snatched from it when but a two-inch infant, probably by the birds, but the theft was forgiven because of the songs they sang.

The garden was the quaintest medley—a sumach (splendidly scarlet in autumn), hydrangeas that never bloomed but put forth such a wealth of foliage as

saved them from destruction, lettuces, fuchsias, a small plane-tree, mignonette, and two tall gold and bronze brooms, an *omnium gatherum*, gleaned from the gardens of friends and often carried miles to their new home. But each one was watched with intense interest, and enthusiasm made up for ignorance, mistakes only adding to the owner's amusement. There was the unhappy bulb that after careful discussion was planted upside down, and nobly made the best of the awkward situation, sending its shoots in elaborate curves to the surface. An apparently dead stick was lopped ruthlessly in tidying up, but put out charming leaves and blossom. Sometimes in a neglected pot, pushed away under a shelf, would come up some pretty flower, an unexpected contribution to the collection. On a day of sanguine ignorance was bought an awning, gaily striped in red and white. The English sun is rarely too hot to take shelter from, and it was used but seldom; but on a summer evening the little platform of blossoms made a delightful eyrie for a lounge and a smoke while the sunset glow faded into purple and London slowly became a soft haze on the horizon. On the left, one looked down on the curve of the little road below, between its tall old houses. So redolent was it of bygone days that one could easily have imagined one saw dainty Miss Fanny Burney walking down to the Assembly Rooms hard by and greeting with a rather cold salute Mistress Barbauld. They were by way of being rivals in the world of letters, and it is amusing to note that Mrs. Barbauld sarcastically describes little Fanny as "this season a great object of interest—that

is, after the balloon that goes up at the Panthéon." And the younger woman writes of her rival's set smile and asks pathetically, "Why must one always smile so?" But happiness must have been deeper than mere surface with the poetess, for, just before she died, at eighty-two, she wrote the well-known lines of hope and cheer:

"Say not 'Good-night,' but in some brighter clime
Bid me 'Good-morning.'"

The very "heart" of this home, the sitting-room, has been left to the last. All too simple to be called a drawing-room, it was styled the parlour, and the old-fashioned term suited it admirably. Its white panelled walls made a charming setting for pictures—a stretch of tropic sea all palest green and faintest blue under a sky where great galleons of snowy cloud floated; little sketches of the overseas land; a fine colour print of a lovely mother and child—a veritable triumph from a little second-hand shop; an English garden glorious in summer fulness; and a Della Robbia plaque, blue and white. The knee-high grate had warmed folk who had lived two centuries ago, and still older were the blue-and-white Dutch tiles that reflected the dancing flames. They came from a wonderful old house that still stands, which in the time of the Restoration belonged to Sir Harry Vane, that noblest of statesmen. In the garden of Vane House still grows a mulberry-tree 250 years old. Perhaps Milton himself sat under that tree and before these tiles, for it is well known that all the great minds of that time greeted Sir Harry Vane

as friend and that Milton and Cromwell were often guests at Vane House. It was from there they took its master away on the journey that ended on Tower Hill when the great republican said farewell to life in so noble a fashion as to make Pepys, the blasé and cynical, write of him as a martyr. Sir Harry loved his Hampstead house well, and though he might have escaped thence, he preferred to meet his fate with calm dignity where he had been so happy.

When the window was curtained close and the light from the crystal girandoles and the tall old Spanish candlestick of painted and gilded wood blended with the flickering firelight, our room was a haven of rest. Quiet, too, it was usually, save for the tones of passers-by or the sound of a piano, so faint and so tinkley that it might have been the spinet the atmosphere craved for. From the inn next door came the murmur of friendly voices doubtless settling great questions of state, and towards closing time one heard the urgent genial request of the landlord to fill glasses and give last orders. Then they trooped out into the road, a cheery garrulous crew, finishing up military arguments and clenching political discussions, the conclusion of all being many good-byes and footsteps dying away and silence.

Silence until dawn—unless there was a raid, and then the road awoke to extraordinary life. One could always tell early when an attack was expected, for a watchman came into the road to rouse the nurses, many of whom slept in the old Georgian houses opposite, adding very much to the picturesqueness of the road as they passed to and fro in their

grey gowns, white head-dresses and scarlet-banded capes. Often we started awake to hear the loud knocking, followed by the pushing up of windows and sleepy answers to the summons. Then came the distant thud of the guns like gigantic doors slamming, and soon the road, so peaceful and silent before, hummed with excitement. Weirdly attired figures, despite of warnings, stood in the middle of the street, arguing as to whether a light in the sky was a star or a Gotha, and recounting ghastly experiences of previous raids.

From the vantage-point of the top windows what wonders could be seen—the midnight blue pulsating with flashes, the exquisite curve of the star shells, the vivid flame of a bursting bomb, an aeroplane etched delicately, for one never-to-be-forgotten moment, against the silver moon. As well as the extraordinary sights, there were the awful noises, the crashing of shells, the long-drawn wail of the screaming shell, the clatter of shrapnel, and the roar of the anti-aircraft guns. The little house shook in the midst of the terrible and bewildering tumult. Viewed dispassionately, and as a spectacle, a raid, under favourable circumstances, was a magnificent sight. A most thrilling memory among many was the falling in flames of a German Gotha, the huge fountain of fire as it struck the ground and the roar of London, triumphant and exultant, that greeted its downfall.

It was here that Noël lived and often wrote, and made his journeyings to and from Printing House Square; and it was during these strange times that

another great joy came to him and he brought home the dear girl who was to be his bride. A fresh world had opened up before him, and he was full of new ideas and plans for the future.

Writing came easily to him. In the room in which he worked with some of his friends in *The Times* office, in the midst of chaffing conversation, he would write, without effort, from memory, an imaginative article or a delightful account of some important event that he had witnessed. He was an extraordinarily quick worker, and rarely did he need to alter a word or a phrase. Even during those illnesses that recurred at intervals as the result of his terrible Gallipoli experiences, his pen was not idle. A bright little book, "The House Party Manual," which Cassells' published and which London reviewers praised, was written on a bed of sickness. It took only a day and a half to do it. It was written straight off on a typewriter propped up on a pillow on his knees, with scarcely a word altered afterwards. George Morrow added, later, his delightfully humorous illustrations.

Not long afterwards came the last sad illness—enteric fever—and, though everything that doctors and nurses could do for him was done, his naturally strong constitution, already sapped and undermined by the wounds and disease of war, failed to triumph over it, and, on a grey winter's day, when London lay under a shroud of snow, he passed peacefully away in the presence of the three who loved him so well. The memories of those last days are too sad and too sacred for cold print, but he died as he had lived, bravely, and even in death his handsome face was

good to look upon. The funeral was not meant to be a public one; but already, in England, he had made troops of friends who held, and still hold, his memory dear, and such of them who had noted the sad news of his passing came to see him laid to rest in Hampstead Cemetery. There, in a corner of the graveyard, near the tombs of Lister, the great physician, and of Kate Greenaway, whose pictures as a boy he delighted in, he sleeps well under a simple granite slab bearing this inscription:

NOËL ROSS,
WELL-BELOVED.

AGED 27.

Dec. 19, 1917.

After his death tributes to his memory and his genius came from many sources. The King, who had seen him on his visits to the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow and on other occasions, had taken a great interest in his welfare, and one of the first letters received after his death was from Buckingham Palace to the Editor of *The Times* as follows:

“The King was grieved to read in this morning’s *Times* of the death of Mr. Noël Ross at the early age of twenty-seven.

“His Majesty knew him well and was always impressed with his personality. I am to express to you and to the staff of *The Times* the King’s sympathy in the loss of a gallant colleague, whose promising career has so tragically been cut short on the eve of his wedding.”

Lord Northcliffe, Mr. Kipling, and others telegraphed

their sympathy, and scores of letters were received from friends and acquaintances. Next day in a message to *The Times*' staff Lord Northcliffe wrote:

"We have had a very severe blow in the death of dear Noël Ross, who was akin to genius."

From members of the staff came affectionate tributes.

The following is an extract from the obituary notice appearing in *The Times* of December 21, 1917:

"We regret to announce the death, after a short illness, of Mr. Noël Ross, formerly of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and the Royal Field Artillery, and of late a member of the editorial staff of *The Times*. . . . He had written for *The Times* an account of the landing at Gallipoli, which was generally acknowledged to be the most graphic description of that event yet penned, and when he finally relinquished hope of fresh military service he joined the staff of *The Times* and contributed to its columns a number of descriptive sketches of rare distinction and charm. Many of them, with other vivid word pictures written by his father, and three humorous articles which the son contributed to *Punch*, were republished in book form under the title 'Light and Shade in War.' An amusing 'Country House Manual,' compiled by Mr. Ross, was recently published. Less than three weeks ago he fell ill of typhoid; his constitution, impaired by his experiences in two campaigns, proved unequal to the strain, and on the 19th instant death brought a promising literary career to an untimely end. He passed away shortly

after his birthday, and a few days before what was to have been his wedding day. . . . In Noël Ross were joined the gift of graceful writing and the gift of a joyous heart. His enthusiasm, his gaiety, his unconcealed and almost boyish enjoyment of the lighter side of life, his freshness of outlook, and his natural charm of speech and manner, will not easily be forgotten by those among whom he lived and moved. As a colleague he will be sorely missed at Printing House Square, and to the friends he made wherever he went his death is a grievous loss."

One who has climbed high on the Fleet Street ladder, in the course of his letter wrote of his great affection for his younger colleague, "but," he added, "like the rest of us, I am too sad to say much, for among my juniors in the writing craft he was certainly the brightest spirit and most lovable that I had met this many a year. That he had genius was clear enough to any of us who, like myself, have known pretty well all the *arrivés* of the last twenty-five years. . . . And what a real good boy: with what a joy in life: what a merry, keen vivid nature: what a responsive heart—equal to all circles, and what a brave fellow. We all loved him. Thank God for him."

"I did not know that anything could so affect me," wrote a brother author, "or that the roots of personal affection could sink so deeply, yet so almost unconsciously, into one's being. The terrible loss is beyond imagining in the face of my own ever-present sorrow at the thought of Noël's leaving 'the warm precincts of the cheerful day.' Expressions of regret

are heard wherever one goes, and whenever a letter is received they are there, intensifying the sorrow, yet lightening it somewhat with pride in the knowledge that he was so well beloved. Everyone speaks of the loss of Noël in the same way. We all expected great things of him."

Of the many other tributes to his memory only a few very brief extracts can be printed here. Sir Ian Hamilton, who had made him his friend, wrote a characteristic letter:

"I have felt the sting of this same sorrow of yours too sharply to write to you before. The chief attraction (amongst a multitude) of your boy to me lay in his intense vitality, and although that was no shield against shells or bayonets, it makes it yet more natural and yet more cruel that his young life should have been cut short by an ordinary illness. I had something of the same feeling with regard to that splendid figure of heroic youth, Rupert Brooke, of whom your boy so often and in so many strange ways reminded me.

"What luck!—what frightfully hard luck, on all of us, but most of all on you, for that boy would have done wonderful things: he had done remarkable things; he would have done wonders."

"Though I had known your son but a short while," a well-known historian wrote to his father, "I and my wife and sisters, like all who had the privilege of having known him, were drawn towards him and had an affectionate regard for him, rare in the case of one so briefly known. His was one of those charming personalities that captivated all who came across

him at once. We deplored the loss of so gallant and noble a life with deep sympathy; and I am glad of this opportunity of expressing what I feel, and what we all feel about him. We have often talked of him since, and said to each other how we felt for those near and dear to him, whose loss no imagination can, I am sure, conceive."

"I felt," wrote a friend from Ireland, "that I must write to you, because, though ours was only a short friendship, I have always felt that I might call your son my friend. I think he must have had very specially the gift of making others feel that—and that alone, as we say in Ireland, will be something to be mentioned to him in heaven. There are so few people who know how to live, and fewer still who know how to die. He lived with every fibre of his being, and when I say that he died as a very gallant gentleman should die, I am telling of what I knew some months ago. Sometimes a man can speak his heart to a total stranger, especially to one who has had the honour of seeing many brave men shake hands with Death, as he could not for very pity do to those he loved. I realized then that if and when the moment came he was ready, with all his youth and that keen brain of his, to meet it as I hope my sons may learn to do.

"You should be very proud. Alas that that very pride should make the sorrow so much more bitter!"

A colleague on *The Times* editorial staff, wrote from the Italian Front:

"To me away here the news came as a great shock,

for I had lost a great friend. We all loved the boy, for that's what he really was, and it was that wholesome boyishness in him which we envied and admired. Of his capabilities there is no need for me to write. The evidence is in the articles by him in *The Times* and elsewhere, and particularly in *The Times*, to which he brought a pen welcome for its freshness and also for its brilliancy. The profession of letters is the poorer by his death."

Though gifted with a rare imagination, it was, nevertheless, perhaps somewhat extraordinary how quickly and closely this young New Zealander identified himself with the charm and historic associations of London, and with the beauty and romance of the Scottish Highlands—the land of his forefathers. This was fully exemplified in those charming articles, "Men of the Glen," "The Home of My Fathers," and "London Ghosts." He was rapidly acquiring a style of his own, influenced no doubt by what had delighted him in the works of some well-known writers of past and present times, and he had great ideas and many plans for the future, including his first novel and a play. He had already amused himself in writing some verse and the playlet that is here printed.

In this book there have been brought together some of the writings of his brief career as a tribute to his memory. They are the product of not many months' work done during the press of modern journalism in war-time, when there was but little leisure for alteration or rewriting. They are as marbles in the rough, to which the sculptor has been unable to put

the finishing touches. But they are stories of a wonderful period in history, and, as such, some of them have an historical significance. Gifted in high degree with imagination, pathos and humour, who can doubt that the author would have given to the world of letters, had he lived, still more delightful and enduring work?

COLLEGE LETTERS

1.—THE EARLY BIRDS

DEAR JIMMY,

I am writing this letter standing up because I can't sit down—neither can "Spud" Morton. I'll tell you why. Just a week ago to-day Spud and I—you know we've got a two bunk dormitory now—slept in. Old Wills had been round with the gong half an hour before we woke up, and first thing I knew Spud was pounding on my chest to get me out of bed. We shed our pyjamas, and made a dash for the baths with towels, etcetera, flying in the air, and upset Jenny on the landing. Jenny's the new maid, a regular sport, and she comes into the story further on. I think we broke all previous school records dressing, and, although there were some buttons we hadn't troubled to do up, we looked fairly right. We sneaked into breakfast through the passage by the bath-room, and mixed ourselves up with the chaps who were getting their tea at the urns. That was all right; but it wasn't any use—Spud bust up the show. You know we sit at a big horse-shoe table, and he is at the bend opposite the Head. Well, poor old Spud—he doesn't deserve pity though—got his tea and went to his seat and then the fun began. The Head stood with his porridge ladle in the air;

he always does that when he is going to rag someone, and in his most pleasant voice said: "Are you fulfilling a vow, Morton, or is it through inadvertence that you wear your waistcoat inside out?" Poor old Spud! Of course he had put it on wrong in his hurry and had not taken the trouble to change it, thinking no one would notice. He got very red, spilt his tea over Douglas's, and said he thought it was a mistake! The Head began to look glassy, so Spud said he'd been in a hurry and hadn't noticed. The Head just worked his eyebrows together, the way he does, and said: "Did you come into the dining-room after Grace was said?" Of course he had to own up. In subsequent explanations it came out that I was late too, and an invitation to the study followed in due course. We went down after Chapel and heard the worst. The interview started with a long lecture on the perils and immoralities of unpunctuality and ended with an injunction. We were to come down to the Head's study "fully dressed and washed," and leave two beastly notes on his table. This was to be done at 5 a.m. Oh, Lord! and every day for a week! With a few kind words in re certain passages in Stokes' "Old Testament History," that neither of us had known the day before, we parted with mutual expressions of goodwill.

Well, there wasn't anything to be done and we were frightfully ragged in the Common Room—I had to reprove Watson Secundus with a toasting-fork. You've no idea how cheeky the fags are now.

Well, next morning we rose at about five and got down to the Study at about five-thirty and left the

notes. We were fully dressed—over our pyjamas. Coming back along the passage we met Jenny, and Spud, who is on awfully good terms with her, explained matters. "How on earth does the Head expect me to get my beauty sleep if I've got to do this for a week?" he said mournfully. Then his face brightened and he smiled at Jenny. He smiled more and more. I knew he'd got a happy thought—and he had. With much pains he explained to Jenny how she could help us, and his plan was this: We were to leave our cards by proxy! Jenny dusted the study at five every morning, and, of course, as we guessed, the Head was never up until a quarter to seven at the earliest. We would write out the beastly slips on the night before, and our deliverer—Joan of Arc, Spud called her—would leave them on the desk in the morning. She didn't quite see it in our light at first, but, with a little more persuasion, Spud worked the oracle. She would do it. So we joined hands and danced a figure of the Lancers round her, but Spud got hit with the broom, and I got a stinger on the ear—anyway we were happy. Well we wrote out our notes, and next morning we went into breakfast with guilty consciences.

Everything was all serene, however, and we were regarded with wondering eyes by the Common Room when we told them we hadn't been down to the study that morning, and wouldn't go down again. We rather gloated, and I wish we hadn't now! However, we wrote our notes regularly, and "Joan of Arc" left them in the study.

This morning our week was up and at breakfast the Head informed us that we need not come down

any more in the morning, but that he would like to see us after breakfast. I tell you we weren't happy through that meal, and Spud was almost sick when the Head pressed him to have some more porridge.

After breakfast we walked down to the study and we both had our football pants on under our ordinary ones—just as a precaution we told ourselves optimistically. We got in and the Head opened one of his drawers and took out a little bundle of our notes, the six Jenny had left. Then he opened another drawer and took out his bundle of canes. He tried a swish or two, and then asked us if we had “any preference.” I never thought I had such a nerve, but I chose the one we call “Black Bess.” She's a thick stout lady, without much spring, and doesn't take a bit out of you with the end by curling round. The Head thought the whole thing rather a joke, and said I was an excellent judge. I didn't quite know which way he meant that at the time. Then he got to business. In his “opening address” he explained to us that he knew all about our scheme, and that “shuffling was useless”: by the way, shuffling is a great word of his. In the course of his chat he mentioned that he had given instructions to old Wills to lock our doors at half-past four every morning. He hadn't unlocked them until half-past six, and as the Head put it, unless we had got zealously out of our window and down the rope fire escape every day for a week, it seemed that there was “something radically wrong somewhere.” He also told us that on the second evening after our late appearance at table he had discovered in his dining-room a small

piece of paper on which our names were written with the date of the day following! He had replaced the paper on the floor, and in about ten minutes Jenny had bustled in to get it. He didn't say "bustled." But I can imagine how it happened. The wily old bird had put two and two together, and given Wills the instructions about the temporary locking of our door. Then the Head got to work again, but in a different way. Spud had the first go, and although he had tired a little when he reached me he put in some pretty hefty driving practice. I have often wondered why he took up golf—now I know. He didn't jaw us any more, but he told us he wouldn't speak to Jenny as "she had done her best for us." Altogether I am convinced the Head's a sport. Well, we got pretty much ragged in the Common Room, and some of the chaps are making pointed remarks in reference to my writing standing up; but if they knew what inadequate protection is afforded by an additional pair of footer pants they would perhaps understand. No more just now as the mail goes soon.

Your loving pal
NOËL.

P.S.—I know now what the Head meant when he said I was a good judge of a cane. His duplicity pains me immensely.

2.—VIRTUE'S REWARD

DEAR JIMMY,

Please excuse this scrawl, as I am writing this letter in the long grass at the baths. It is a great day, hot, and there isn't a breath of wind. There are about six fellows left at school to-day, and Spud and I are among the six. It isn't because no one has asked us out that we are here, but because we have had another row with the Head. He's gated us for a week, and, thank goodness, this is the last day! It wasn't Spud's fault this time, but it wasn't altogether mine. Who would guess that cows—but I will tell you about it from the start. You know that since Pater gave me that rod I've been awfully keen on fishing, and haven't had much chance yet, down here. Anyway, last Sunday I persuaded Spud to cut Chapel in the morning and bicycle down to the river.

We got two day boys who had come to Chapel to sit in our seats, and of course when the gaps were filled up the Head couldn't see our vacant places. We got away through the gate leading into the gardens by the football field, and got our bikes from two fags who had ridden them out of the gates and a little way down the avenue. When we got down to the river, we were so hot that it was unanimously decided that a bathe was our most urgent need. It was so funny to think of all those fellows in Chapel that we both laughed for about five minutes and swallowed quite a lot of water. In the end we decided we would give the fishing best, and just sun bathe and read.

It really is a beautiful place, and, as we lay on a dry strip of sand, we could see quite a long way down the river. The willows are great at this time of the year, and a big bank of Californian poppies was reflected in the pool formed by a groin to the left of us. Every now and then, even though it was so hot, a fish would rise lazily, more in play, than with any intention of dining. The hot air made the grasses and willows quiver, and the only noises were the lazy chatter of the stream and the chirp of the crickets,

We had lunch and then Spud read aloud for a while from "Lorna Doone"; it's a jolly fine book. After a time we both dozed off, and it was late when we woke up. We had just time to get dressed and ride back. We waded the river to our clothes and made a horrible discovery. My socks and both our ties were gone, and the neck band, one sleeve, and part of the shoulder of Spud's shirt was eaten, yes, eaten! Now this may sound like a tale, but it isn't, and you know, Jimmy, I wouldn't pull your leg for worlds. About twenty yards away from our clothes stood a cow, a common red and white cow, and out of its mouth was hanging one end of Spud's green tie! Of course we chased the wretched animal, but it wasn't any use; it just galloped off into the gorse. Then Spud got facetious and said that if we followed it leisurely we would be bound to get all our things back because my socks would be sure to make the beast sick. However, it was no use growling, so we got as much dressed as we could and started off. I fell off my bike laughing at Spud without a tie and with no shirt worth speaking of to fasten his collar to, but I sobered up when I remembered

my socks, and felt painfully conscious of about two inches of bare ankle between my shoes and my trousers. They're very short, my Sunday bags. Well, we plugged along in the hope of getting back early enough to get a change, but, when we reached the gate, we were just in time to see the last of the master's hoods going through the Chapel door. As you know, the dormitories are all locked immediately after breakfast on Sunday, and, as the Matron had the keys, and was in Chapel, we couldn't get anything from her. We rushed through the bath-room into the changing room, and Spud chucked me a pair of first fifteen footer stockings. You know what they are like with the two inch rings of black and white. Anyway I got them on, and Spud got a tie, or what had once been one, that some chap had been using as a belt for his cricket pants. He hung it and his collar round his neck somehow and tied an awful knot in the tie, a bright green one. The only thing I could get as a substitute was a strip torn off an old pair of red bathing trunks, but it had to do. Well, we rushed across the quad and stopped for breath at the door. They had just got as far as the General Confession when we arrived, so we had to wait. Now we sit on opposite sides of the aisle right up near the organ, and I began to funk. Spud wouldn't hear of it, so we marched in. I know what that Johnny—Tennyson wasn't it?—meant when he said somebody or other was "the sinecure of every eye." Well, this time we were both sinecures, and I tell you, if ever you are offered a job as one, don't take it. By the time we got to our places there was an audible titter all up the aisle,

and the day boys' mothers and sisters were all staring at us. I didn't dare look at the Head, but Spud did, and he said afterwards that he looked quite unchristian and couldn't have been following the service a bit. Besides all this, all the beastly little fags and choir kids were sniggering. Later on, when the self-conscious feeling had worn off a little, I had a look round, and, to my horror, there was Joan sitting with her mother in a front pew. She was very red and looked angry, and of course that made me feel more wrathful than ever, because I have been particularly keen on Joan this term, the last half of it, anyway. That was the longest service I have ever had, and after it was over we doubled hard to the Common Room. Gainsford has a ripping affair he got a saddler in town to make at the beginning of the term, and he hires it out for threepence a time. It is a thick piece of saddler's felt with straps on, and when properly arranged would almost stop bullets. It is covered with a thin piece of leather, so it makes the right sort of row, too. Of course he only has one, so we tossed up for it and Spud won. As it happened, he wasn't lucky.

We had to wait only about three minutes when Wills came down to inform us that the "headmaster requested our presens in 'is study." You had only to look at his cheerful old dial to know that there was trouble in the air. We followed the messenger of the inquisition to the torture chamber and were cordially received. Of course we told him everything, and, when we got to the loss of our socks and ties, he stopped us short. Then he started off and talked.

He told us that not content with several flagrant breaches of discipline, we had again added the sin of unpunctuality to our list of offences. "I could pass over such misdeeds as those of wilfully absenting yourselves from Chapel, and even your coming late to the evening service, with slight punishment, but when you deliberately fabricate an astonishingly ridiculous and puerile story, and moreover, to make that story seem the more realistic, you rig yourselves up in the guise of negro minstrelsy, I cannot overlook your conduct." This to me: "Especially as you have been particularly lax of late in your school work. And now 'Argumentum ad judicium.' I propose to seize the present opportunity, 'carpe diem'—you will remember that phrase, Morton—and punish you both, so that you will be able to regain a small part of the esteem in which you were formerly held by me." And then I am blowed if the old bird didn't wink. Well, he executed me first, and stopped in the middle of his work to point out what unprofitable weeds in the garden of school life lying and unpunctuality were. That's one of the best of his I've heard. Then he got to work on Spud. After three beautiful and noisy smacks, he picked the padding, and in his stoniest voice said: "Morton, you will take the rest on your hands!" And he did! At last he let us go, and we weren't sorry. The only thing I regret is that Joan had seen me in that fool's rig-out. But I saw her after Chapel this morning, and she is all right.

No more just now.

From yours,
NOËL.

P.S.—Spud's just come down to the baths, and he tells me he has a splendid quotation which fits the case: "Veritas odium parit"—Truth brings hatred. Don't you think it does?

3.—VALE!

DEAR OLD JIMMY,

To-day is my last day at the old school, and I feel just as if I had lost my best friend. You know, Jimmy, how it feels. You must know! Even the worst slacker in the place finds out at some time in his years at college that he has had chances and missed them. And again, a fellow may not be particularly keen on Chapel and all that sort of thing, but that last service makes you think, and keep on thinking. If all new boys could only get the ideas that those chaps who know they are leaving have, there would be a dickens of a lot of trouble saved, a great deal more work done, and a lot of fun missed.

You know that the Bishop usually preaches on Commemoration Day. It's got to be a sort of institution. This morning he didn't appear, and a stranger was waiting on the quad with the masters. Some of the fellows were growling a bit because the Bishop hadn't turned up: we all like his preaching—but we didn't know then what was in store for us. Even in "big-school" waiting for the choir to come along I felt weepy and almost funk'd going into Chapel. I think I'll always remember sitting in my place in the big school there waiting for the bell to stop. Outside, through the diamond panes of the windows, the masters in their hoods and cassocks were standing

at the corner of the quadrangle, and I couldn't help thinking that I was looking at it all for the last time. I've always thought it was a jolly fine sight, the green of the quad, and the avenue out on the road with the tops of the chestnuts showing over the hedges by the gates; but it never looked so well as to-day. When we got into the Chapel, too, things seemed different. At any time it is a beautiful place, but to-day, with the sun streaming in through the memorial windows, and every seat full, it looked grand. Just above my seat is the brass plate in memory of the Old Boys who fell in the South African War, and to my left is a window for two brothers, both in the same regiment, who never came back. I couldn't help wondering where they used to sit in Chapel. Perhaps their place was near where I was sitting. And I wondered, too, whether they thought of their old school out there. I bet they did !

It's not hard to see why a service in Chapel is so out on its own. For one reason, everyone, from the smallest fag to the head prefect, sings like blazes, and another reason is that the Chapel is the Chapel. I think some of the times when one feels proudest of the college are when the fifteen is battling hard against an even team and winning, or even losing, with a grace, and at the Commemoration Day Service.

Well, everyone did sing, as usual, and " Fight the Good Fight " made us all weepy, at any rate the six of us that were leaving. It's jolly hard to sing at all with a big lump in your throat, and ever so many chaps seem to develop colds in their heads. All the day boys' mothers and sisters are there, too, to see

if you make a fool of yourself. When we all sat down again I couldn't help thinking what was going to happen outside when we were cut off from the apron strings of the old school. Didn't you feel rather helpless for a time? I did, I do now. I wondered whether things would go right, and I think it's at a time like this that a fellow realises how heavily he has been leaning on his college. It's just like being stuck away out at full back when you've been playing in the scrum, you feel awfully helpless, and can't trust yourself unsupported. But I want to tell you about the sermon. The stranger parson was a little chap, and didn't look much of a gun. When the time for the sermon came he went up to the lectern, and put his notes on it. Then he started. He took as his text "You bring your lives to a close as a tale that is told"; it's from the Psalms somewhere. In about three minutes he had everyone in the Chapel sitting up and listening. He followed out his theme and told us a great story about his school days, and afterwards. There was a boy at school with him—his best friend—and they left the same term, on just such a day as to-day. One of them went to Edinburgh, and the other to Oxford, and for a time they wrote to each other, but they drifted apart as boys do, and for years the preacher heard nothing of his friend. When he went Home he asked about him, but was met with a shake of the head. After all, he hadn't done well at Edinburgh; he had got into fast company, and drifted out to South Africa, and, as far as was known, "gone under" altogether. No one knew anything about him; he was one of what's

called the "lost brigade." Then the preacher went on, "Two or three years afterwards I received a copy of the School Register, which tells you all about Old Boys, and I looked up this boy's name to see if anything had been heard of him, and, to my joy, against his name were these few words: 'Killed carrying water to the wounded at Spion Kop.' And this was how, after all, my old school friend, by God's mercy, had remembered the honour, the story of his school, even at the eleventh hour, and added to it a lasting page of heroism and of sacrifice."

Well, Jimmy, when he stopped, there was a sort of breath of relief all over the Chapel, and everyone was either finding imaginary hymns or pretending to blow their noses. The Head was as bad as anyone, and he looked quite tearful. Most of us felt as if we wanted to get up and cheer, but we just sniffled. And then, Jimmy, the end of term hymn! It always breaks me up at any time, but to-day it was the last straw. We sang it as well as we could, in a choky sort of way, and went out into the quad. There were six of us leaving, and I know we all felt the same. I know we looked it. Then some idiotic ass rushed up to me and said, "You're leaving, aren't you? Lucky dog!" Well, I don't think that chap will ever know what a really close call he had. If it wasn't that I'd just come out of Chapel, I'd have smote him one. I'd about an hour to spare before tucker, and I should have finished packing up, but I couldn't do it, so I went to the Common Room, and got my "straw." Even that gave me the pip when I looked at the black and white band which I'd have to take off soon

Anyway, I went down to the long grass and lay there with my hat over my eyes, watching the little coloured spots where the sun came through. I just wanted to think. Then I went back to the Common Room and waited for dinner. After dinner, I packed up, and Spud and I have said our good-byes, and I'm glad they are over too.

It's a good scheme stopping with Spud, instead of coming straight home. We'll cheer each other up a bit, perhaps. You will get this only two days before I arrive, but I had to write or bust. The cab is at the door, and Spud is yelling for me, so I'll leave this here to be posted. I don't want to talk until we get in the train and I told him that. And now I'm going round to the Chapel and the big school, to have a last look and say a sort of good-bye.

Oh, Jimmy, what a pity it is that everyone can't go to college twice over. The second time everything would be all right, and you would know what to do and what not to do. But I suppose that wouldn't be fair, would it? But there must be a great compensation in being an old boy of such a school; don't you think so? I'm off to the Chapel; good-bye, old man, for the present.

I am,

Your old pal
NOËL.

OFF TO WAR

WELLINGTON, N.Z.,
TROOPSHIP No. 10.

DEAR JIMMY,

We go out into the stream to-morrow morning early, so I am writing you now, and will post it before we leave the wharf. We have our mess in the huge saloon, but all the marble panelling is covered over with rough deal boards. The regular tables have been taken out, and we now sit at boards that are as rough as our manners. You know we have a mixed company, and bank clerks and big run holders sit cheek by jowl with shearers and roadmen. All of them are jolly good fellows though, and all as keen as mustard to get away. Yesterday I saw Henderson, you know the chap who bought a station and about thirteen hundred cattle, handing round the stew at the two centre tables, and one of the men he was waiting on was a chap who used to be his polo groom! War is a great leveller, and here one sees instances that seem almost laughable. They are saved being that by the fact that not one man amongst the whole force is in the least self-conscious.

Last night I lay up on the boat deck and soaked in the glorious night. Somewhere, on a transport lying away over towards Evans Bay, a bugle sounded

"First Post," and one by one all the ships echoed the call. On our forecastle a man with a violin was playing Raff's "Cavatina," and playing it like a master. Now and again the whinny of a horse would break into the melody like some strange obligato. I listened to these sounds until "Last Post" rang out from our deck first, and then blended in one sad call as the other ships joined in as before. One by one the rows of lighted ports disappeared, and I went down to bunk feeling something like I did years ago when I sat in Big School waiting to go in to my last Commemoration Day service.

Next Day.—My head's in a whirl after this most wonderful morning. We paraded early, and rumour for once was right. There was something afoot. One had only to look at the warships to see that, for they had stowed their cutters and pinnaces and were in sea-going trim. At about half-past eight the first of our escort, the flagship, steamed slowly out of the harbour, and one by one our big grey transports followed, until we brought up the end of the line. It was a wonderful sight, and the few people who had the luck to be about saw something that they will remember all their lives. We went slowly towards Pencarrow Light, and past the beaches where we used to sun-bathe in less stirring times. A splash of white away up on the hill amongst the manuka scrub marked the house where we spent our week-ends this time last year. On the other side of the harbour faint cheers came from shorewards, and a flag dipped to us as we passed the Forts. On through the rocky headlands and out away westwards, past the long

white beaches, and then the iron-bound coast of Tera-whiti. The strait was calm as glass, and as the long line of sixteen vessels swung out, the smoke from their funnels towered in black columns above them. The six transports on the starboard side slowed down (we could hear the bells of their engine-room telegraphs) until the last six of the line came up abreast of them. Then in double file, with the black signal cones showing that they were making "required speed," they forged slowly ahead.

Away to starboard, a big grey cruiser belched black smoke (she burns oil), and the flag at her stern was the Rising Sun of Japan.

Evening.—Terawhiti Head has long ago faded into the soft blue mist, and we have left Farewell Spit abeam. Never did so many New Zealanders say farewell to it before. Ahead of us the sky is a blaze of crimson and the soft smooth sea has absorbed the colour until the horizon line almost fades away to nothing. At first, an hour back, it was a faint pink, but as one watched, the few clouds edged with rose took on a brighter hue until they reached a colour climax of vivid crimson. Even now it is dying. Along the deck the men are cleaning up the horse-stalls, but every now and then an energetic sweeper pauses and leans on his broom, looking his last at the faint line of Farewell Spit. Perhaps, who knows, we may live that moment over again when we start off on our last trek.

I was watching a man leaning on the rail just now and he smiled slowly, then laughed to himself. Seeing me, he explained: "I was just thinking of

the last time I came across here. It was in this same old tub, and when we got about here I was cussing a deck steward who said he couldn't find me a chair. That was my bunk (pointing to a deck cabin used as the Colonel's office), and I thought it wasn't as good as it might be. And here I am mucking out stables and swabbing decks, where six months ago I was standing telling another passenger that the Company's food seemed to be getting worse and worse. Then we only had a choice of about twenty-five dishes and now a man is safe to make a hundred pound bet that it's stew for tea. Well, it's all in the game! Get over there, you swine!" and he bent to his work again scrubbing the planking beneath the feet of a large chestnut that seemed to resent his attentions.

There's "Cook House Door" going, and as I have tea in the second relay I'd better be off.

Yours,
NOËL.

ZEITOUN CAMP,
CAIRO.

DEAR JIMMY,

We have come the old, old route of the ocean caravans, and are here in a city where the centuries jostle one another.

Past the door of my hut but five minutes gone, Joseph led Mary on an ass, and a racing taxi dusted the father's blue robe as the lowly group drew aside.

Over the railway line at Matarieh is the Virgin's

tree, where Mary rested with her babe in their flight. Tourists and others visit the spot and afterwards produce the inevitable camera record, saying to their friends, "Of course, it is only a legend." But it is not. I know better now, for as I watched a mother came to the *sakhia* wheel and cupped her hands to the water running from the pottery jars. She drank the cool draught, and sitting on the stone well-coping gave her child to drink also, crooning softly until her song murmured like the plashing water from the well-wheel. And the patient ox with his wicker head-stall, for all he could not see, knew as well as I that Mary did rest here.

Camp is camp all the world over, but a Cairo camp is surely like no other on earth. We are on the boundary of Heliopolis, the ancient city of On, and at the end of the camp road one crosses a patch of desert where the people of old time buried their dead. The graves are narrow shafts, and two days ago Spud and I explored a number of them. At the bottom, short stone-lined galleries radiate to the tombs, all of which have now been despoiled. Still, one comes across an occasional scarab, or a deposit of beads of some ancient dynasty. Isn't it weird to think where some of these may find their way? Back in New Zealand or Australia, the ornaments of an Egyptian princess may become sacred souvenirs of a life given for the Empire.

Since I have been here I have got the deuce of a respect for our camp cooks. It is easy enough to get sand in the food, but it must take brains to turn out a stew that resembles nothing so much as slabs

from an asphalt tennis-court soaked in gravy. If the Israelites had half as bad a time as we are having with the sand then we cannot wonder at their clearing out. The thing that surprises me is that when they got to the Red Sea they wanted to walk across on dry land at all. I should have thought that they would have said, "Thanks, but we would be glad of the chance to swim."

Spud and I went to the citadel last night, and sat on the battlements where Napoleon mounted his guns. It was just getting dusk, and all the sordidness of the city was veiled with a soft violet haze through which the minarets of the mosques showed hesitatingly. Over west, past the river, the sun set behind the Pyramids. It is only thus that one gets any idea of their size. The muezzin came out on to the minaret of a near-by mosque, and with his hands held trumpet-wise called the faithful to prayer. The wonderful notes rose and fell, infinitely sad, with rippling syllables and alliteration.

Then from the battlements below us, now shrouded in darkness, came words of command. With startling suddenness the garrison bugles rang out "Retreat," all their harshness mellowed by the soft warm air. To our left through the gloom stood a sentry, and as we watched we seemed to see the cocked hat, the long white spatterdashes, and the clumsy musket of an age gone by. He came nearer and I heard him sigh for his home in France, and then I caught the murmur, "Pour la Patrie."

But it was just a Tommy, commonplace and unromantic, but even in him the spirit of the old days

still lives. And so I think it does with us. There are rumours about that we have a move in prospect, and we may soon get out of this stagnant backwater into the full-flowing stream that may lead us God knows where.

Yours as ever was,
NOËL.

THE LANDING

A GLASS flat sea covered with a shallow mist, and beyond, the tops of green hills peering through the vapour, dim shapes of warboats and transports, and a fleeting glimpse of a seaplane as it winged over the Turkish positions: this was the scene that met our eyes on the morning of April 25, when we approached the peninsula of Gallipoli. Drowning the noise of the winches in our transport there rose and fell the thunderous arpeggio of the heavy guns, ceaseless in its monotonous roar, but, as we drew nearer, relieved by the staccato crack of the bursting Turkish shrapnel and the plunge of the heavier shell in the water amongst the transports.

As we approached the shore there came to our ears the continuous rattle of musketry, first scarcely perceptible, but at last growing to an ear-racking roll as of giant kettle-drums beaten without reason. Through glasses I could see one of our skirmishing lines advancing from the boats on the beach. It was as though one watched a cinematograph screen. The white boats on the beach and some brown figures sadly still on the grey sand, the green grass, and a tilled field across which advanced lines of our attacking force formed the foreground. Steep hills, clay-faced and covered with dense scrub and dwarf ilex, over

which the cottonwool puffs of shrapnel appeared and disappeared, made the background.

Business-like and brisk a destroyer glided alongside our transport towing strings of heavy barges.

"What's it like over there?" we asked.

"Pretty warm, boy," answered a smiling gunner, "but they're on the run."

Straight to the beach we ran, to the foot of the hill, but the destroyer necessarily could not take us right in to the sand, and we lay smiling sickly smiles at each other as the bullets purred and whistled over and round us. The sharp-pointed bullet "meows" like a motherless kitten as it passes you, but it enters the water with a "phut" that suggests something more unpleasant.

At last the barges were taken as far in as possible and we jumped into water up to our armpits and half swam, half waded ashore. I had often wondered how one would feel going into a tight corner for the first time, and then I knew. It was as if someone had given me a smack below the chest with the flat of a heavy spade. Later came a sense of elation.

Formed up we marched along the beach past dressing-stations already hemmed in with stretchers and wounded men. An Australian and a sailor lay beneath an oil sheet, their feet in the little waves.

"Reinforcements at the double on the left!" roared an officer through a megaphone, and then added as a shell burst overhead, "Keep in under the bank—shrapnel's unhealthy."

Then came a toilsome, tiresome scramble over the

high bluffs to the firing line. On the top of the first ridge we came through a Turkish trench. In it were a dead Turk, bayoneted, a box of ammunition, and many flies. Stooping low we doubled to the brow, ever with the purring bullets overhead. Wounded on the way to the beach passed us cheerfully, saying, "It's hot as hell up there!" And it was. When we had crossed a gully and gained another ridge, half an hour's scrambling and sliding, we were scarce 200 yards from the last, so steep is the ground.

Snipers were everywhere, and as we made one descent of about 100 feet, at an angle of about 10 degrees past 90, bullets spattered about on the stones and in the bushes round us. I struck a shingle slide and my downfall was expedited.

At the bottom I saw a wounded man bleeding badly over one shoulder. He grinned hideously with his shattered mouth. "Got it where the chicken got the axe," he wheezed, and fainted as the stretcher-bearers came up to him.

And so on, up to the firing line, where I got separated from my own unit and found ranges, that being my job, for an Australian regiment. Through the powerful telescope of the range-finder I could see the Turkish retirement and then an embryo bayonet charge by some of our men. Still the wounded came back in apparently endless procession. They were wonderful, cheerful, and full of information and profanity.

Then in our trench things began to happen. Personally, I think a sniper spotted the range-finder,

for two bullets lobbed into the trench parapet and then the man next to me stood straight up and fell back over my legs. "Mafeesh," he said quaintly, the Arabic for finished, and then more slowly, "Money-belt—missus and kids—dirty swine, dirty——"

Then a strange thing happened. Dying, shattered beyond recognition, he rose to his knees and dragged his rifle to the parapet. With a weak finger he took shaky aim at the sky and fired his last shot, to collapse finally in the bottom of the trench.

Obviously the Turks had our range, for things began to get too hot for comfort. Those who were left of us changed position about a hundred yards along the trench, one of the Australians first resting a dead man's hat on a bush on the trench parapet. "Got our range," he said laconically, "better let 'em have a little target practice." They did, for the hat only stayed there five minutes.

Then we spotted our sniper. Have you ever gone stalking in open country with only dry water-courses or stone slides as cover and a Royal smelling danger on the slope opposite? It was rather like that.

Two of our men crept from the trench and crawled out of sight through the bushes. All unconscious the Turk continued his rifle practice until a double report rang out and our two men appeared on our left waving the sniper's hat—their equivalent of a scalp. After that we had comparative peace.

Away to the right a machine gun, like a motor-cycle, purred incessantly, and then one started nearer and to our front. A seaplane from the *Ark Royal*, anchored in the bay behind, soared overhead,

and twice white puffs of shrapnel appeared below her, where the Turks lobbed two shells. It is rather like shooting at a rocketing pheasant, this aeroplane-potting, and has about the same result. Then she turned and went back to report.

Something was due to arrive, and it did, suddenly, in the shape of a naval shell. First came the ear-and-nerve-shattering roar of the gun, then the shriek of the shell overhead, and away in front a cloud of smoke and earth rose slowly and drifted away, showing a gap in the skyline and a few Turks, who obviously recollected that it was about time to start for the last train to Gallipoli. Away they went out of sight and then the naval guns started in earnest.

From the bay below came one continuous thunder, and the screech of the heavy projectiles was incessant. No sooner had one burst than another was on its way.

Presently the 15-inchers started and we tore up some "pull-through" rag to put in our ears. Commands, unless shouted, were unintelligible now, and one felt ridiculous yelling against such thunderous voices. Below in the bay a warship was firing salvoes from her 6-inch battery. Puffs of brown smoke would jet from the bulwarks, and then, a long while afterwards, the roll of reports would shake the hills.

Then the enemy's guns joined in the argument. Shrapnel began to burst above us, and the whistle of the flying bullets was everywhere. The brass nose of a howitzer shell struck from nowhere upon a mound in front and rolled into the trench. I burned my fingers picking it up. For three hours this

violent cannonading lasted, and then it gave place to a more desultory, but still severe, bombardment.

We had gained our footing at heavy cost it is true, but at least a mile square of the Gallipoli Peninsula was ours, and Von der Goltz Pasha was proved a liar. Back on the beach stores were beginning to come in. Horses, donkeys, and mules were landed and ammunition reserves grew as one watched. Men were carrying water to the firing line, ammunition and oil for the machine guns. On every path the stretcher-bearers toiled with their sad loads, and wounded waited patiently in little knots by the dressing stations, laughing, chatting, and cheering each other. Sweating under the hot sun the doctors worked like machines, probing, washing, bandaging. Often the hurts were beyond aid, and a handkerchief covered the face of one man I had known as a cheery optimist on board the transport. The Brigadier-General in khaki shirt and neat riding breeches was sending off innumerable messages—cool, ubiquitous, and business-like, he inspired others to emulate him.

Wonder of wonders! We had been ashore only six hours when three wireless stations sprang up mushroom-like on the beach, and their buzzing sparks told the warships just how and where to send their screaming missiles. Troops continued to land, and as soon as they were landed were rushed to the firing line, usually to the left for the right was well held and safe for the time.

At nightfall the bombardment ceased, but Turkish shrapnel burst over the beach and the wounded

in the boats were submitted to a hot shell fire. The rifle fire continued, nerve-racking and noisy. Sleep was out of the question, and trench digging, to consolidate the position we had won, commenced almost immediately.

On our left along the beach about half a mile, a boat, sunk in the surf, rocked uneasily. With the aid of a glass I could see its freight. Sitting upright were at least eight dead men, and on the beach another twenty. A sailor, distinguishable by his white cap cover, lay in an attitude strangely lifelike, his chin resting on his hand, his face turned to our position. The next afternoon I casually turned my glasses on the pathetic group, and saw that the sailor was now lying on his back with his face to the sky. There was no mistake: he had been alive, and perhaps even now, after lying there nearly thirty-six hours, he was still alive. I was destined to get yet another thrill. In the centre of the heap on the beach there was some movement.

And then I saw distinctly a khaki cap waving weakly, and presently a man detached himself from the group and hobbled slowly towards us along the beach. Immediately the snipers started afresh.

Four other men and myself made off along the beach to meet the sad figure, which by this time had collapsed. Ten yards out from our trench we drew fire, and the bullets whispered confidently "Duck," and as they entered the water or hit the stones by our feet, "Run like the devil!" I personally cut out the first hundred yards in well under eleven seconds, and although my style might have been ragged it

was good enough and got me to a small sandy knoll where I was able to talk to the man. There were four others still alive out there, he said, and "last night there were eight, but it was cold, and they'd had no water or food and couldn't last it out." That was all.

We got him in slowly, and afterwards the others, but not until one of the warships had dealt with the snipers. Later we buried all the others. One of the men we brought in had been out there half in the water and half out, shot through both knees, but he was cheery and bright, and asked first about his brother in another company, and then explained where the Turks were sniping from.

At night the rifle fire waved backwards and forwards in fluctuating bursts, and we expected an attack at dawn. It came, but not against our position. More in the centre the enemy made a desperate effort. They approached our trenches—came through the lines, and were certainly brave and venturesome. Once an unmistakably foreign bugle blew the "Cease fire," but an order was passed down our line to take no notice, it was a ruse. At one time, as darkness came down a voice in English called out "Retire! Retire!" but as there was no immediate reason why we should retire, we waited, and again Brigade Headquarters informed us it was not a British command.

It will be hard to forget those first days, and even now I wake at night with the patter of musketry in my ears, only to find some cart is rumbling past the hospital on uneasy wheels.

ST. PAUL'S AND THE ABBEY

August 4, 1915.

TWELVE thousand miles away, in New Zealand, there is a slate-roofed, ivy-covered college chapel, where, almost a year ago, every seat in chancel and nave was occupied by pupils past or present. The masters in hood and surplice, the choir-boys in their black cassocks, filled the back benches, and in front privates and officers sang for the last time the end-of-term hymn and listened to the farewell sermon. These men were on the eve of departure, volunteers going to succour a land that most of them had never seen.

Then the scattering of all shadows,
And the end of toil and gloom.

The notes echoed in the chapel rafters, and from the lectern the hopeful words of the Benediction fell on the bended heads of the men.

Not a year has elapsed, and many of those present that evening are lying in nameless graves among the dwarf oaks of Gallipoli. Yesterday, one of those who had passed through the Valley of the Shadow heard the words of the same hymn sung beneath the dome of England's greatest Cathedral. They awakened sad memories, but soon the majesty of the scene and service, almost oppressive in ceremonial grandeur, filled mind and eye. Personal

loss and pain both were forgotten, and, in their place, came a sense of immeasurable pride and thankfulness, pride in being a citizen of so great an Empire, thankfulness for the steadfast courage of England in her dark days.

To many of these men from overseas the magnificence and solemnity of the ceremony was overwhelming. To them all the pageantry and panoply that pass almost unnoticed in a great Imperial city were strange. The intensity of their patriotism, the fervour of their loyalty, had been fostered by no such outward show. So it was that the splendour of the grand old church, the pealing organ, the angel-voices that soared to the misty roof, the gathering of the greatest in the Empire, formed never-to-be-forgotten impressions that will be handed down as heirlooms. Ignorant of Monarchy, the New Zealander looked almost reverently on the khaki-clad figure of him for whom he had fought, well content with the quiet dignity that gives such confidence.

The National Anthem, which now means so much more than it did a year ago, was sung with thrilling fervour, and its passionate patriotism and loyalty must have in some measure compensated for the anxieties and responsibilities that beset a throne.

Midway through the service, as the Archbishop's fervent prayer arose, a ray of sunlight flooded the gloom, striking into sudden brightness the ring on his lifted hand. A whisper of good omen was heard as the shadows fled before the sunbeams. God grant that it may be so, and that before long Prince and people may again meet in thanksgiving for a peace

which, when we had it, we did not value. Never have the ties of Empire been so close. They are cemented with the life-blood of the Colonies, and the King rules over an undivided dominion—God save the King !

April 25, 1916.

When the weary Crusaders came back from the parched plains of Syria to lay aside for a while their dented shields they rode in grand array. Lances twinkled in the sun, pennons snapped in the breeze, and the esquires riding behind their mailed lords kept eyes aslant to the flag-bedecked scaffolding where a white hand sometimes showed favour. On knight's surtout and steed's caparison the Red Cross proclaimed the right, and keen blades and sharp lances vouched fully for the might.

To-day Londoners saw such another pageant, but a sadder and more sombre, in which the note of triumph was not so dominant. And yet the Templars of old were not inspired with any finer spirit than the knights of this latter-day crusade. Both had upheld the Cross against the Crescent.

They came 12,000 miles to fight their battle. Farmer, clerk, student, and labourer heard the Imperial call, and heard it perhaps more clearly than their kin "at home." Some made their sacrifice at the landing, and they have slept for a year heedless of the strife around them. Others with better fortune strove through the long months that followed.

And yesterday they marched proudly through the very streets that centuries ago rang to the ac-

clamations of the populace welcoming back the old Crusaders. In the faces of those that watched them pass they saw a reward for all their sacrifices.

There was a sadder procession still. One that made its way more slowly to the Abbey. Here a man with empty sleeve helped a limping comrade to his seat. There one pair of eyes did duty for two. These were they who were unable to march with the others, for their wounds were not yet healed. Some of them were but wrecks of the strong men who left their homes in October two years ago, but all were cheerful in the sense of work well done.

A year ago the first of these men landed on the shore of Gallipoli. It was a fair day, and the blue waters of the Ægean showed scarcely a ripple. They landed with battalions 1,000 strong. Death, wounds, and disease took heavy toll as the long days dragged past, and many a man laid his best friend to rest among the stunted oaks, laboriously carving a cross to mark the sad mound.

Hell Spit, Shrapnel Gully, Quinn's and Courtenay's, all have become memories, but memories that haunt waking hours and hours of sleep alike, memories seared in the brain. To-day in the Abbey these wraiths came back to us, and for a short time our dead lived again. Comrades of the trench and sap passed noiselessly through the aisles gazing wistfully at the kneeling soldiers.

Heads were bowed beneath the frayed banners of ancient fields, and the strong voice of the preacher echoed through the fane, and echoing found response in the hearts of the worshippers. Kneeling with them

and with them in heart and thought was their King, whose call summoned these men across the world, and at whose bidding will come many others until the great fight is won.

Many a pageant has the Abbey seen, but never before have three thousand men from the outskirts of Empire worshipped with their King in its storied pile. The service had a climax almost oppressive in its sadness. The Australians and New Zealanders turned their eyes towards the altar as the notes of the National Anthem echoed through the Abbey. They saw there the simple khaki-clad figure of the only man in our Empire who does not stand when the Anthem is sung. And they wondered what he thought. Surely he saw as they did that every man in whose company he worshipped would again be willing to lay down his life to uphold his sovereignty.

The service closed with a quiet almost uncanny, and then the silver-throated trumpets rang out the soldier's saddest notes, the Last Post. I do not know who wrote that call, but, whoever it was, he put into it all the pathos, all the hope of resurrection, and all the triumph that man knows. It ended, and for a while longer there was silence.

Three thousand men trooped out of the Abbey, but even in so short a time had a change been wrought. Not a man but knew, as he stepped into the warm sunlight again, that he fought for the right. On us all in that half-hour had fallen the mantle of our fathers, whosoe'er they were—baron, priest, or serf. We have inherited this fair land. And for such a heritage will we gladly give our all.

ABDUL: AN APPRECIATION

I HEARD the shriek of an approaching shell, something hit the ground beneath my feet, and I went sailing through the ether, to land softly on an iron hospital cot in a small white-walled room. There was no doubt that it was a most extraordinary happening. On the wall beside me was a temperature chart, on a table by my bed was a goolah of water, and in the air was that subtle Cairene smell. Yes, I was undoubtedly back in Cairo. Obviously I must have arrived by that shell.

Then, as I was thinking it all out, appeared to me a vision in a long white galabieh. It smiled, or rather its mouth opened, and disclosed a row of teeth like hailstones on black garden mould.

"Me Abdul," it said coyly; "gotter givit you one wash."

I was washed in sections, and Abdul did it thoroughly. There came a halt after some more than usually strenuous scrubbing at my knees. Mutterings of "mushquais" (no good) and a wrinkled brow showed me that Abdul was puzzled. Then it dawned on me. I had been wearing shorts at Anzac, and Abdul was trying to wash the sunburn off my knees! By dint of bad French, worse Arabic, and much sign language I explained. Abdul went to the door and jodelled down the corridor, "Mohaaaaam-

med! Achmed!" Two other slaves of the wash-bowl appeared, and to them Abdul disclosed my mahogany knees with much the same air as the gentleman who tells one the fine points of the living skeleton on Hampstead Heath. They gazed in wonder. At last Achmed put his hand on my knee. "This called?" he asked. "Knee," I told him.

"Yes," he said thoughtfully, "this neece—Arabic; this" (pointing to an unsunburnt part of my leg)—"Eengleesh."

Then the washing proceeded uninterruptedly.

"You feelin' very quais (good)?" Abdul asked. I told him I was pretty quais, but that I had been quaiser. "Ginral comin' safternoon and Missus," he informed me, and I gathered that no less a person than the Commander-in-Chief (one of them) was to visit the hospital. And so it happened, for about five o'clock there was a clinking of spurs in the passage, and the matron ushered in an affable brass hat and a very charming lady. In the background hovered several staff officers. Suddenly their ranks were burst asunder and Abdul appeared breathless.

He had nearly missed the show. He stood over me with an air of ownership and suddenly whipped off my bed-clothes, displaying my nether limbs. He saw he had made an impression. "Neece is Arabic," he said proudly. It was Abdul's best turn, and he brought the house down. The visitors departed, but for ten minutes I heard loud laughter from down the corridor. Abdul had departed in their wake, doubtless to tell Achmed and Mohammed of the success of his coup.

I had been smoking cigarettes, but found the habit extravagant, as Abdul appreciated them even more than I did. One morning I woke up to see him making a cache in his round cotton cap. I kept quiet until he came nearer, and then I grabbed his hat. It was as I thought, and about ten cigarettes rolled on the floor. I looked sternly at Abdul. He was due to wither up and confess. Instead he broke first into a seraphic grin and then roared with laughter. "Oh, very funny, very, very funny," he said between his paroxysms. Now what could I say after that? I was beaten and I had to admit it, but I decided that I would smoke a pipe. To this end I gave Abdul ten piastres and sent him out to buy me some tobacco. He arrived back in about an hour with two tins worth each eight piastres. "Me quais?" he asked expectantly. "Well, you are pretty hot stuff," I admitted, "but how did you do it?"

Abdul held up one tin.

"Me buy this one," he said solemnly; "this one" (holding up the other one) "got it!"

"What do you mean, 'got it'?"

"Jus' got it," was all the answer I could get. Then to crown the performance he produced two piastres change. Could the genii of the "Arabian Nights" have done better?

I was in that hospital for three weeks, and I verily believe that if it had not been for Abdul I should have been in three weeks more. He had his own way of doing things and people, but he modelled himself unconsciously on some personality

half-way between Florence Nightingale and Fagin's most promising pupil. The day I was to go he cleaned my tunic buttons and helmet badge with my toothbrush and paste and brought them proudly to me for thanks. And I thanked him.

The last I saw of Abdul was as I drove away in the ambulance. A pathetic figure in a white robe stood out on the balcony and mopped his eyes with his cotton cap, and as he took it off his head there fell to the ground half a dozen crushed cigarettes. It was a typical finale.

BENEVOLENT NEUTRALITY

I KNOW a man who was ten months at the Front dodging coal-boxes and "Black Marias." He came home last month and broke his leg trying to dodge a perambulator at Hyde Park Corner. My case is somewhat similar. At Gallipoli I dodged dysentery, jaundice and kindred ills, but at last I met my fate. A few days ago I was vaguely conscious of a nagging pain under the two back buttons of my trousers and in my left knee and foot. I told the Adjutant, and found him interested but not sympathetic.

"You've got sciatica," he said exultingly. "Do you feel tired in the small of your back? Have you pains in your hip and down your legs, and aches in your feet?"

I confessed to all these symptoms.

"Ah!" he said, "shocking thing that. Had an aunt who died of it once. Plays the deuce with a man of your age. You had better see the Doc. right away. He'll get a board fixed up for you."

He pushed the bell and the mess corporal appeared.

"Bring me a long whisky," he said.

"Me, too," I murmured.

The Adjutant looked aghast. "Whisky with sciatica!" he exclaimed.

"No, with soda," I said.

"All right," said he, "it's your funeral."

The next day the doctor came and gloated over me. "Does that hurt?" he asked, sticking a stubby thumb into the small of my back.

He looked resentfully at me as he picked himself up from the floor.

"I'm sorry," I told him, "but I was scarcely ready for that."

"You can be boarded to-morrow," he said as he left hurriedly.

I was boarded, and got a month's leave and some advice. I was told to go to one Friedenborg for massage, and I went.

Friedenborg proved to be a pleasant-faced Swede, but his looks belied him. The Grand Inquisitors of Spain were novices to him. He ushered me into a small room and in an unguarded moment I allowed myself to be divested of all clothing and laid face downwards on a velvet couch. I hate velvet at any time. The touch of velvet or peach-skins is enough to make my teeth go on edge all down my back.

The Swede stood over me with the expression of Jack Johnson just before he hit up the Bowery Pet at Bashville, Illinois.

"I think this is the place," he said as he made a savage jab at the back of my thigh.

"I can feel it," I said as I came down on the sofa again. I made up my mind not to let him see my true feelings and composed myself to die as an English gentleman should, although it hurt

my pride to meet my end at the hands of a neutral.

Presently he brought out a table with an instrument upon it like an overgrown dentist's drill. At the end of a cable were two hard rubber balls. These he put on the middle of my back and then turned over a switch.

"It is a vibrator," he hissed between his teeth. I had almost guessed it myself, but I did not argue.

Shutting my eyes, I could easily imagine myself in a London bus, and if anyone had called, "Fares please," I'd have felt for my pocket, which wasn't there. Just when I was getting used to the thing he stopped. "Marble Arch?" I hazarded, but he was in no mood for humour. He got to work with his hands.

First of all he kneaded my hip-joint into a soft dough, which he pulled out into strings like an American shop-girl with her chewing-gum. Then he let them go again like loosened pieces of elastic. He burrowed in amongst my joints like a terrier at a rabbit-hole, all the time giving little grunts of satisfaction when I jumped. Soon I got wiser, and when he hurt most I lay still, and jumped when he got on to a comparatively painless spot. By this simple stratagem I contrived to keep him busy without disappointing him or depriving him of his exercise. I rather wished he had been a real inquisitor, for I would have become a Brahmin or even a Buff Orpington to have him stop. Any old creed would have done me if he would only have left me alone.

Then a galling thought crossed my mind. I was paying him to do all this, and only the week before I had sworn off theatres because I considered them extravagant in war-time.

Presently he transferred his attentions to my spine. He played at being a devout monk, using my vertebrae as a rosary. He took each of them separately and ran them along my spinal cord like beads on a Chinese abacus, clicking them together.

In between the more strenuous efforts he discoursed on the war. "The Germans will soon begin to feel the pinch," he said suddenly as he grabbed a handful of flesh from my back.

"If it's a pinch like that I almost feel sorry for them," I thought.

"But is this blockade stopping their food?" he demanded, as he ran a row of horny knuckles up my back.

"Ah," I said, "there's the rub."

He discoursed on the Western offensive, and gave an imitation of trench-digging on my hip-joint. Then he talked about mining and ran out a whole series of deep saps from my ankle to my knee, counter-mining on the other leg until he ended with an explosive burst that would have destroyed a whole battalion. I bit hard into the wooden head-rail of the sofa for the rest of the séance, and at last he finished.

Before I knew what was happening he had booked another appointment for the next day.

Since then I have been again many times, and all my pains have fled. The little devils in charge

of the sciatica department gave it best, and realized that the Swede was their master. My mental outlook has changed also, for at first I prayed nightly that England would declare war on Sweden. Now I am grateful, and fully recognize the meaning of a benevolent neutrality.

THE GRIST HOUSE

*(With acknowledgments for suggestions received at The
Gift House, 48, Pall Mall.)*

EVELYN has got some steady congenial work at last. She is helping at the Grist House, where they receive and sell gifts for the benefit of a great and deserving charity. She is engaged in selling other people's property at prices that draw even the dealers. In the Grist House you can buy anything from a Great Dane dog to a lock of hair from the head of Marie Antoinette's maid-in-waiting. All these things are given, or one might almost say extorted, from citizens who have spent long years in collecting. Evelyn has taken her degree in the art of extortion. She goes to a friend's house to dinner in London, or in the country for a week-end, and comes away with perhaps a hundred pounds' worth of pictures, plate, postage stamps, pottery, old prints. She takes these to the Grist House and tickets them. Every time she is asked out she brings grist to the Grist House; so beware.

The men and women who hand over these things in their generous after-dinner moods often relent when they come down to breakfast and look the matter over in the light of day. Then they come to the Grist House and buy them back. They

come up from their country houses disguised and wearing false whiskers and false sang-froid. At the end of the street they remove the former, and the latter falls from them automatically. If they are lucky they strike a day when Evelyn is not on duty and they are able to buy back their treasures at a rate that would seem impossible if they had time to think about it at all. If she is there, they come in with an air of charity, and end up by buying a great many things that they have no use for. This is the essence of the business. It is a great thing to consolidate the supply and demand in one person. If you can persuade a man to give a piece of tapestry worth £200 and buy it back at double that price, you are exactly £400 to the good.

I went into the Grist House the other day and found Evelyn attired in a holland overall and a disarming smile. She started on me before I had decided whether to take off my hat or remain covered. She tried to sell me a donkey, a Murillo, a Spanish scarf, a Roman coin, an autograph letter of Louis XV., and a pair of boots worn by George R. Sims at the coronation of Queen Anne.

I feigned deafness.

Then a man came in who was obviously a purchaser. He sauntered down the length of the room and looked all about him. Evelyn was on to him like a seagull on to a piece of fish. "Have you seen this old glass?" she asked, and dragged him across the floor. He did not seem interested in old glass and tried to tell her so, but she was in no mood to listen. "This carpet is beautiful, isn't it?" she

purred as she turned over a many-coloured rug. Still nothing doing. Then she tried him with a sauce-boat, a Castilian wedding canopy, a meer-schaum pipe and a pair of jet earrings. All this time he was trying to speak, but he had as much chance of getting out three syllables as a Democratic candidate at a Republican meeting in Lame Dog City, Cal. At last Evelyn stopped and the man got a word or two in thinwise. "I've come about the electric light," he said.

Presently she did get a real purchaser. He had picked up a Dresden group. "That is most interesting," said Evelyn impressively; "it is an ancient piece of Ming chinaware, about three hundred years before Yuan Shi-Kai. Its price is only thirty guineas. Shall I wrap it up for you?" "I'm afraid not," said the man. "You see I presented it myself last week. I didn't know it was Chinese, though," he said pleasantly. Again Evelyn was stumped.

They have got to such a state of perfection in the Grist House that they can tell what a man's income is to ten pounds before he has been in a minute. If the visitor is really well off and runs into five figures per annum the whole staff of lady-helpers rises as one woman and hems him in. For every thousand you come down one less assistant gets up. When I go in there is never a move, and that is as it should be. Two days ago a man came in wearing an anxious look and a Harris tweed suit. He looked a three-figure man at the most, and Evelyn got up from her seat and then sat down again languidly. The man glanced round the various exhibits, and at

last looked rather inquiringly at Evelyn. She dropped her book and her blasé look and said sweetly, "Have you come to look round?" The man said he had, and asked the price of a diamond necklace. He was told it was two hundred and fifty pounds, and Evelyn and I watched to see him faint. Instead he drew out his cheque-book and said, "Who shall I make out the cheque to?"

In five minutes he had the whole staff round him. In five more he had bought an Irish terrier, some Irish lace and an Irish glass dessert-bowl. Then he was shown a fly-whisk, a Maori axe, an amethyst intaglio, and a Rembrandt. He signed cheques for all these. Then Evelyn tried to sell him his own walking-stick, which he had put down in a corner. When he left finally he had come to the last cheque in his book, and the floor was littered with his purchases.

Every now and then there are quite immaculately dressed men who stroll in and pick up the different articles and put them down again without a word. They are obviously dealers in these things, and they wear the air of a Sergeant of Grenadiers escorting a batch of "Group 49's" past Wellington Barracks. Sometimes they see something that pleases them and they allow a little animation to creep into their sad faces. Then they take out magnifying glasses and gaze long and intently at hall-marks and initials. Sometimes they sign cheques, too; but when they do the Grist House people know that the sale is not one to be proud of.

One of the greatest works of the War is being

carried on at the Grist House, and I have yet to meet a man who was not satisfied with a purchase made there. Its chief merit to me is that it keeps Evelyn busy, and now she need not cut her hair and her skirts short and don khaki and a Sam Browne belt. Evelyn always does things thoroughly, and I am pleased to say that she is just now going through her visiting list, putting a mark against all those people who have still got some old china or prized antiques hidden away. If she has her way all her friends will have exchanged their collections amongst themselves before the war finishes. Perhaps, when peace is declared, they will be able to sort them out again.

THE MAN WITH THE FEARLESS EYES

MY sister, Lady Beverly Brooke, has a new hobby. She has just given up Buddhism. The coffee-coloured high-priest who held séances and hands in her drawing-room became acquisitive and forgot that the tenets of his religion only bade him acquire merit. He acquired some of her best old silver, and when he was found leaving the house with a cloisonné vase beneath his ample robes she decided that Buddhism did not quite supply the meditative influence that she desired. Her new recreation is taking out wounded colonial soldiers. She visits the various hospitals and insists that she shall be allowed to take out the wildest and woolliest men from the back-blocks that happen to be in at the moment.

I went with her on Saturday last. We saw the matron at the first hospital we called at, and she was sorry, but there were only tame and sophisticated men in her wards, so we went elsewhere. At last we found a place where there was a man who had never been loose in London except on his way from Victoria in a motor ambulance. It seemed too good to be true and my sister was sceptical. "Are you sure that he is just what I want and really new to towns?" she asked. "I want one of those

fine rugged men who have lived close to nature all their lives and are unspoiled by the contamination of modern society. I want to take him round London and listen to his appreciation of all its wonders." The matron assured her that the man was just like that and went to bring him down. She went down the corridor, and presently we saw her talking to a man in uniform. "That is the man," said Evelyn excitedly. "Look at his weather-tanned face and his easy walk. That comes from tramping the open spaces. Isn't he wonderful?" Then the matron came back to tell us that the man would be down in a minute. "How splendid he looks!" said Evelyn enthusiastically. "Who?" asked the matron. "Why, that great strong colonial boy," said Evelyn. "That's not a colonial," said the matron, "that's Mr. Smith, of Harley Street, the great aurist. He comes here twice a week." Then Evelyn started to talk rapidly of the flower show and the last Zeppelin raid. Presently our man did come downstairs. I must say I was disappointed, but Evelyn was quite satisfied. As he was getting his pass she whispered to me to notice his fearless blue eyes. This she also attributed to living in the open spaces. She also drew attention to his firm mouth, which she said was formed as the result of dealing with nature's moods, probably with the arduous difficulties of the trail to the gold mines, and the strenuous and thrilling work of the round up of the cattle on the great prairies.

We took him to Kensington Gardens first. He was shy and did not talk very much. Presently he

asked if he could smoke, and Evelyn had the chance she had been waiting for. She presented him with a twist of the darkest tobacco I have ever seen and a new corn cob pipe! He seemed a little taken aback, but she would not be gainsaid. "I know you men from the ranches smoke this sort of tobacco," she said, "and you would not look at all at home with an ordinary pipe." He took the pipe and filled it and for a time he smoked in silence. "I do wish he would spit," whispered Evelyn to me; "I am sure he wants to." If he did he was too polite to do it and she was disappointed. Presently we came to the statue of Peter Pan. "That," said Evelyn, "is Barrie's Peter Pan." Then the big New Zealander spoke. "I didn't know Barry had any kids," he said, "but he's a fine sculler. Saw him row against Arnst on the Wanganui once."

Evelyn was evidently at a loss, so I explained matters. "It's not the Barry who rows," I said. "It's the novelist." "Oh!" said the New Zealander.

We went past the Round Pond and along a shaded walk. Presently I saw the New Zealander, who had got slightly ahead, crouched close to the ground, every muscle tense, like a leopard about to spring. I thought he was ill and ran to him. "Shhh!" he whispered. "Keep quiet. Can't you see it?" I said I could see nothing out of the ordinary. "It's a rabbit," he hissed. Then he crawled nearer, and I picked out a very surprised bunny peering through the bushes at us. Such things were new to the sophisticated park rabbit, and with two blasé hops he dived

into a burrow. "Run and get the boss," said the man, now more excited than ever, "I've got his burrow marked down." "There is no boss here," I said placatingly. "Then get the man who owns this place," he said. "The King owns it," I explained. At last I persuaded him to get up, but he was still far from happy. "Hasn't he got a rabbiter?" he asked. "Doesn't he know there are rabbits in this paddock?" "Isn't he too delicious," cooed Evelyn, "and so colonial. Just fancy a Rabbiter-in-Ordinary to the King. Who could we give the position to? It would be just like another Chancellorate of the Duchy."

By this time I was near a state of collapse, but Evelyn was as a ticket-office man who has been given half a sovereign for a sixpence and about as willing to give up her find. He calmed down a bit, but when we got to the Row he surveyed a squadron of women in the latest divided skirts with great wonder. "Where's the circus?" he said seriously and in a loud aside as one lady in neat riding-breeches walked her horse past close to the railings. Near Albert Gate we met Lady Broke with the Duchesse de Cri Nisi. Of course Evelyn took her Tommy up to show him off. He chummed up directly with Lady Broke. "Do you know the King?" he asked. "Well, I have met him," she said mystified. "Well," he said, "you tell him from me that he has rabbits in that big paddock back there."

We got him away at last, but not before Angela Broke had been made to promise that she would

write the King a note or "Perhaps call round on Sunday and tell him he had rabbits."

All this was six days ago. Last night I went to Betty Holloway's to a small dance. It was very hot and rather crowded, so I sat down in the smoking-room and amused myself watching the dancing through the open door. Opposite me was a youth of elegant appearance. He was large and handsome, with a tanned face and blue eyes. His dress suit was faultless and looked like one of those garments that never seem to appear except on tailors' advertisements. Languidly he poured himself a whisky-and-soda, fitted a cigarette to a six-inch amber tube, and then winked solemnly at me. "Did Lady Broke give my message to the King about the rabbits?" he asked. Then I remembered him. "But," I gasped, "you aren't, you can't be, it's too absurd." "Don't you wish I would spit?" he said in a stage whisper. As he went off to join his next partner he stopped for a moment. "I am sorry," he said, "but I couldn't resist it. We had a great afternoon, didn't we!"

Then I sought out Betty. "Who is that young New Zealander?" I asked. "Oh he's not really a New Zealander at all," she said; "he just happened to be in New Zealand when war broke out. He was deer-stalking with his uncle, dear Lord Bowinda, and he joined up as a private."

"Can I use your telephone?" I asked.

"Is anything wrong?"

"Oh no," I reassured her, "I've some news for Evelyn."

PLAYING THE BYE

THE Ayrshire coast curves gently, edged with white, green-topped sand dunes. Over the water Arran, veiled in mist, lies like some fairy isle, fading from view and reappearing as the winds of the sea sweep round the channel of Bute Sound and curl about Pladda.

On the mainland of Ayr a rampart of sand keeps the sea from the links and protects the greens from the salt spray. This is such a course as the best golfers love, but it is strangely deserted to-day. A gull stands on the first tee undisturbed. No one calls "Fore," even the caddy-house is silent. There are occasional sounds from the club-maker's workshop, however, and as I peer into the shadowy room from the bright sunlight I see a very old man bending over his work. "My hands is a wee bit stiff whiles," he mutters half apologetically, "but I'll do it wi' the best o' them again." And then, bit by bit, he tells why it is that he has left the warm chimney-corner and come back here to do work that he has not done for fifteen years.

His son was the professional club-maker here, and when the war came he had laid aside the spoke-shave and the rasp and donned the kilt and the khaki

tunic. I asked what regiment he had joined. The old man's answer was typical. "The Argylls," he said, "and what else, him bein' a Campbell? He was trainin' doon in England for six months, and then he went tae France for the battle o' Loos. He was a sergeant, he was, and he led his men when his officer was killed. It was about the evening when they brought him in, and there was no' much left o' him, for a bit o' a shell had got him in the chest. He died there, and I had word from his major a fortnight since. He's comin' this forenoon to tell me the way he died. And maybe you'd like to stay and hear, too, for Jamie liked you fine, and he used to tell me that you were a fine one wi' the driver, but awfu' weak on the short game."

Presently the Major came. There are some men to whom other men take an instinctive liking at first sight. Here was one of them. He was tall, but broad, with eyes clear and blue, and thick, close hair that curled under the edge of his Glengarry. He shook hands with the old man silently, and looked inquiringly at me. I rose to go but old Andrew stopped me. "He knew Jamie," was all he said.

Then the Major told the story of the hopelessness of an attack that overreached itself. Now and again he spoke, as if inspired, of the great heroism of his men. "I saw Jamie afterwards, just before he went. He was cheery, and not in pain, and he asked me to tell you he was happy that he had saved for you, and you would not want for anything. Just before he died, when his breath came hardly, he

said: 'Tell father I'm going from the rough to the fairway, and that it was a fine game.' "

The old man laid his head on the bench before him, and his silver hair mingled with the clean white shavings from the club shafts, but he said nothing, and presently he straightened himself and his old eyes kindled. "If they'd have me I'd be off and away now, but I must just bide here and keep up Jamie's wee bit business, e'en though he has left us."

Again the knotted hands took up their work for a while, and the Major signalled to me, and we rose to go. "I've got something for ye here," said old Andrew, and he rose to fumble in a pile of half-finished clubs in the corner of the shop. "It was a club that Jamie was makin' fo' ye afore ye both left here, but he never finished it. I was puttin' on the grip for you last nicht. It was this brassie. No, don't be thankin' me, for I did naething but the shaft and the grip, though I'll no be sayin' they're no done well."

I saw the club as he handed it over. It was a bonny head, but the shaft was scored by bad work and the grip was lapped and folded as if a child had put it on. The waxed threads that bound it were all overtwisted and the varnish for the thread had run down the leather and the wood and botched it sadly. But the old man handed it to the Major as if it were the most perfectly finished club in the world, and the Major took it in the same way, as if it were a king's gift.

As we went over to the club-house, I asked the

Major what he was going to do with his gift. "Of course, you will have to get it re-shafted?" I asked, with intention; and his answer was the one that I wanted. "It's worth my whole bag of sticks," he said, "and the shaft is the best part of it."

LONDON GHOSTS

AS the devout Arab goes to Mecca, so have I come to London. I have come to pay homage to a city and to the ghosts of the past that people it. Far off, on the underneath part of the globe, I dreamed of London, and my dreams were queer ones. My picture was a conglomerate of Dickens and Pepys, of the *Spectator* and the *Tatler*. Added to this was the stalwart figure of a London policeman. In the background a Phil May coster girl's ostrich feathers waved coquettishly.

And now I have seen London, and I have spent months in the vain attempt to sort out and pigeon-hole impressions that crowd each other so close that they serve me little better than my far-away conception gleaned from Pepys and Dickens.

I came to London on a dull day, with the spires and domes showing up uncertainly through the soft rain. I passed through Whitehall and Westminster, and I looked out at the sooted, grimy Palace and the great Abbey, feeling that somehow none of it was new to me. Later I visited these places again, and my first thoughts were confirmed for me. You here in England do not know all the world of meaning in the word heredity. It seems to you almost inconceivable that a man can come from a small Oversea

Dominion to this great city and fit automatically into the places his forefathers filled. But it is so.

I had thought to see St. Paul's great pile gleaming in the sun in all the splendour of white stonework and masonry. Instead I saw it through a mist, and it was befouled and sooted and grimed from smoke and fogs. Then I knew that therein lay its beauty. Wren had no hand in all this. One doubts whether he foresaw it, but in those great stone columns and massive cornices the dirt and smoke of centuries have worked a miracle of light and shade. Reliefs are made to stand out amazingly, the great flat walls are softened and marbled in greys and blacks. In places, in striking contrast, the rain has washed the stones and kept them white.

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If you live in a country that to the white man is but fifty years old, and then come suddenly to a city where you find the dust of ages, it oppresses you. It seems wonderful to think that you can touch an altar rail that was set in the stone floor six centuries ago; that you can kneel at a shrine where the Templars prayed; can walk on a terrace where Raleigh smoked tobacco from his own Virginia. I have seen the tombs of the Kings at Thebes, the great pyramids of Gizeh, the mosque of Sultan Hassan—all these go back to ages in which London was perhaps unthought of. And that is precisely where they lose all their impressiveness. So old are they that one cannot people them with the men and women who lived at their building. Here it is different. It is not a great Abbey that you

marvel at. It is the thought that you can repeople it in any age to suit yourself. Here are fretted archways, flying buttresses, lofty spires, all of them things of beauty in themselves, but think of them in the making! Think of the raw stone for the arch under the chisel of the carver, and the spire still masked in scaffolding to which figures in mediæval costume carry these carven blocks to set them in their places. Think of Westminster with its tonsured monks and its gowned novices. Think of that high window in Whitehall on that day when a King stepped from it to the scaffold above the silent, awed crowds. Always it is the same. In Holyrood, in Edinburgh, a little wainscoted room would have no meaning to the man who did not know the story of Rizzio. When that is told the past returns. It is the same in London. What matters if you watch the twopences ticking up on a taxi clock as you go to the Tower? When you uncover as you enter St. John's Chapel all that is blotted out by the mist of years, and you see in the half-light the kneeling figure of the Conqueror, in mail and white surtout, praying for this realm. And the accents of others in the Chapel seem to be the voices of the Norman priests droning their credos and their paters. Almost one smells the incense from swinging censers.

The sound of mellow bells steals through the narrow windows, and outside you hear the footsteps of armed men, the stamp of caparisoned war-horses as the Conqueror's knights gather to offer thanks for past victory or pray for the success of fresh ventures. What does it matter that the benches are unoccu-

pied and the altar is bare of vessels of silver and gold ?
In the still hours of the night all these ghosts return,
and there is the slow chant of voices, the splash of
holy water as the stone stoop is filled, the rustle of
the vellum leaves of the ponderous missals, the tinkle
of coins into the alms boxes.

This is London, a city of ghosts that will stay for
all time.

THE HOME OF MY FATHERS

THERE comes a stage in convalescence when a man gets wilful and can stay still no longer. And so, not heeding the doctor, I set off for Scotland, and found myself in due course at the little village of Tarbet that fronts Ben Lomond on the other side of the loch.

There I found great pleasure in the stern hills and the curving beaches, but I wanted something more. I had come from the Antipodes to the home of my fathers, and I wanted to find out for myself what it was in this place that always tugs at the heart-strings of the Scot be he never so far away. Apart from reading, all I knew of Scotland I had learnt from my grandfather, a Scot of Scots, who only spoke English because the Sassenachs amongst whom he had settled did not understand the tongue of the Highlands.

Something of this I told to a chance acquaintance, and he prescribed, "Walk from here to Loch Long and over the Pass of Glencroe to Inveraray. Take your time and avoid the trains. They spoil the Highlands." "I will," I said, and I did.

I left Loch Lomond behind me and walked at my ease over the brae to Arrochar and so round the silver waters of Loch Long, where once the Vikings

had sailed their ships before the fight at Largs saw them sent their ways. The road winds dusty white round the shore to the Pass of Glencroe, and up through the pines to the saddle of the hills at Rest and Be Thankful. I rose above the burn that became as a winding glinting thread below, until I overtook an old crone, bent as a wind-warped tree-trunk. We walked together silently to the Rest and sat to take breath amongst the sweet heather. The climb had been hard to the old dame, but she suddenly asked me a question when her lungs had rested themselves. At least I was in two minds whether it was a question or a statement of fact. "You'll not be from these parts?" she said abruptly. I told her that I came from the other side of the world, and that this was my first pilgrimage to this country. "Aye," she said, "I ken that fine, but your fathers were here and this is as much your country as it was theirs. Look down the glen there and tell me whether it's new to you."

* * * * *

So I looked, and as I did so the purple mists of the early spring evening gathered and massed, and the strip of white that was the stream faded away for a while. It cleared again, and I saw that the road had become narrow. It was no more broad and white, but a rough path that skirted the great boulders and climbed short steep faces with varying grades. Far down below me the peat reek curled lazily upwards in wreaths and rings until I could smell its sweet savour in the clear air. At the door

of the shieling from whence the smoke came there was a splash of colour, brilliant red even in the subdued light, and it came to me suddenly that I was there to watch the men who wore those red jackets. So I lay very close to the ground with my head low in the heather and my bonnet in my hand. From high above me there came the soft cry of the mating whaup, three times repeated, and I answered it with the same notes twice. I thought it not strange that as I lay I should pull my sporran from under me and find in it a wad of oaten bannock and a lump of white crowdy wrapped in a cabbage leaf. I munched hungrily, always with one eye lifted for the redcoats at the cottage door. Presently the red splay became a straight line which then curved as it wound up the hill. I gave a whaup's cry again, and for answer there came a rustling of the heather at my side as a bearded face and a shock of red hair came level with my shoulder.

I greeted the new-comer in the Gaelic, nor thought it strange, though I had never known the tongue, nor, indeed, had my father, unless one take account of the few words that anyone would glean from mere listening. The red fellow gave my name in the Gaelic, and we talked in whispers in that speech, and all the time the red ribbon wound farther up the mountain-side until at last it ceased to be a ribbon at all, and we could count the ten men who toiled under their knapsacks, led by an officer, who walked alone. How hot the captain looked, although he carried nothing but a light sword! I wondered at this, for I had come the same gait many a time, and

never so much as a bead of sweat had come to my brow. Now they were below us, and I leaned out and over the heather tuft that I might see the better. As I did a stone rolled from beneath my foot and crashed through the stems towards the men below. My companion leapt like a deer and ran upwards, bent double to keep below the musket-balls that whipped the branches from the twigs on either side of him. I saw his drab hosen and bare knees go flitting over the brae-top, and I bethought me that perhaps it were better if I ran too, for the leading four of the soldiers was a bare ten yards below me climbing fast for all their accoutrements. Picking up a stone, I threw it with all my might, thanking my father the while that he had skilled me in such games. I saw it hurtle through the air and strike a man's face, which became on the instant redder than his coat, but without any of the shape that a man's face should have. Then I lifted my brogues and footed it up the hill-side, the wind fanning my face with the speed I ran at. From behind again came the sputter of musket shots, and I felt as though a hand of steel had torn the calf from my leg and had smote me full in the ribs. I ran on and ever upwards, and at last the sound of the voices grew fainter. Where the heather was thickest I found two great stones propped together with a hollow between. I pushed myself in feet first, and next I woke to see the wan dawnlight coming over the hills. I tried to pull myself from the cranny, but it hurt me sorely, and I stopped.

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And the mists came down in the Pass of Glencroe again, and there was the road broad and white, no longer a path. There was no smoking chimney below, for the cottage was roofless. There were no redcoats either. The only thing left me was a stabbing pain in the side and in the leg, but I knew that was from a wound that I got at Gallipoli in April last year.

"I have been sleeping," I said to the old woman who still sat by me, "and dreaming, too." "Maybe, maybe," she said, "but they were nae your ain dreams. Come you with me."

She led me over the hill and up away from the road past two great stones with a hollow between them such as a man might hide in. We went on, and there on the lonely hill-side was a graveyard with a score of stones set all agle, with the moss so thick on them that it was not easy to read the lettering. She led me to one of them and rubbed the green from the inscription, and I found myself staring at my own name. I read plainly, "To the memory of Alexander Ross, who was shotte hardbye this place by soldiers of the English, but who lived seven months afterward although he carried his wound to the grave and his hate with it. Decem: 15, 17--." That was all.

"And what might your name be, now?" asked the old woman. I told her shortly, for the thing amazed me. "There were lots of your folk here at one time, although they did not properly belong to these parts. They buried here, and they say that yon cottage has had nae a roof tae it this long syne, for the soldiers

burnt it at the time they shot this same Alexander, who lived there then. It may be true. I ken there was folk of your name hereaway when this road was but a wee bit path through the heather."

And so saying she hobbled slowly down the far side of the hill. As for me, I sat by the old stones until the evening shadows fell across the hill-tops and the valley was hid in mist.

MEN OF THE GLEN

THERE is a kindly wind blowing from over the loch. It comes stealing down from the slopes of Ben Donich, ruffles the still water in frosted patches, and creeps through the castle policies, telling the great oaks something that keeps them whispering all the morn. The little town seems sleeping. The splash of the brown waters over the weir beneath the castle bridge fills the ears. A heron stands motionless in the shallow water, surfeited with the full meal he has just finished. Then from the direction of the town there comes the sound of a drum. If we draw nearer we will see why it is that the loch-side is deserted. In the church square some 200 kilted lads are saying a farewell to their sisters and mothers and other people's sisters and mothers, for they are marching to the wars, as their forefathers have done before them from time immemorial.

This little hamlet has sent men to every war that Britain has engaged in, and no matter how far back you go, every onfall, siege, leaguer, every brawl between nations has seen Mac-Caillein Mor's men well in the forefront of battle. And so it is that these men have left the loch-side and the brae, have left the fishing boat on the beach, and the sheep without a shepherd.

The last good-byes are being said, and a girl with eyes as blue as the waters of the loch on a summer's day calls to her brother, a tall piper. "See and no forget to pipe to they Germans," she says, "and look after Sandy for me. I'm feared he'll be led away by yon French lassies." A corporal answers her, "I'll look after mysel' fine," and he kisses the girl and rejoins his ranks.

The officer in charge of the company gives a warning, and the men hoist their web slings over their shoulders. The pipers form up in front of the column, and as they move off they toss the drone and the stocs of the pipes on to the hollow of their shoulders. There is a chorus of farewells broken into by the wheeze of the filling bags and the buzz of the great drones. The drum beats on the setting down of each felt foot, and away they go with cap ribbons fluttering in the breeze, sporrans a-swing to the step. The drum rolls and the glen is wakened as it has been many times in the past with the lilt of one of the finest marches that ever burst from the chanter—"Baile Ionaraora" it is, better known to you as "The Campbells are coming." Round the town front and past the old inn and the great stone-arched gates, to the castle walls where the pipers change their tune to the salute, "Failte 'Mharcuis." By the burying ground they step out to the march once more, and until they are over the humpbacked bridge the tune continues. It stops with a sad little gasp as the bags deflate and are tucked under each oxters with the stoc ribbons to the fore, fluttering their dark blue, yellow-striped tartan ribbons.

Suddenly a man in the front four breaks into song. His clear voice echoes back to the listening women by the inn:

The Rover o' Lochryan, he's gane
Wi' his merry men sae brave;
Their hearts are o' steel, an' a better keel
Ne'er bowl'd owre the back o' a wave.
It's no when the loch lies dead in its trough,
When naething disturbs it ava,
But the rack and the ride o' the restless tide
An' the splash o' the grey sea-maw.

Under the shadow of the hill the wind steals the song and carries it away and up the glen, but as the road crosses a tongue that juts into the lake it is still borne faintly down to the listening women.

We dash through the drift and sing to the lift
O' the wave that heaves us on.

From the crags under the beacon it is repeated wistfully. "The wave that heaves us on." The light goes and the lamps are lit in the cottages along the front. The tall girl who was anxious about Sandy is the last to leave. She shades her eyes with her hand and looks again, listening the while, and down the winding waters, "the trough o' the loch," there comes the ghost of a melody. But the wind is fickle and it stays but a moment. The girl turns and goes into a cottage near at hand. "You'll no' be wantin' the light yet a while, mither," she says, and the old woman agrees.

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The seasons have changed the leaves in the glen
as the yellow St. John's wort changes the wool for

the tartan of the Lachlans. There are no young men left in the town. There are but old men and women and the sturdy youngsters fretting that they might too be allowed to go to the wars. The blue-eyed girl waits on the jetty for a steamer that is as yet ten miles down the loch. She knows this, but she must wait here. At last a puff of smoke heralds the approach of the little boat that soon afterwards creeps round the promontory. As it ties up at the jetty the girl sees two kilted figures on the deck. She sees them through a mist of tears, for one man, her brother, has an empty sleeve. And yet he is the luckier of the two, for he helps the other man to the gangway, putting his hands on the side rails. "Twa steps, Sandy," he warns him, but the blind man is safe at last, and softer hands have helped him on to the quay.

"I didna' see much o' they French lassies, Alison," says he bravely, "for it was dark when they took us through to the front, and when I came back it was dark, too, leastways it was for me." "Oh, Sandy, Sandy," cries the girl, and Sandy knows that the splash of wet on his hand is not from the rain that has been threatening for the last hour. So these three go up the little street to the cottage where a very old lady meets them. "Come ben the hoose, and we'll just have prayers," is all she says when she has stepped from the one-armed embrace of her son. And the four of them kneel and offer thanks.

Put the scene back a hundred years to the "Forty-five" or back further still, and there is nothing new in it. Think it out for yourself, and ask what it is

that brings these men of the heather and the glen to fight for England. They have been treated as outlaws, hunted and slain. Their dress and their music were forbidden them, their very language was proscribed so that it was a crime to speak it. And yet—and yet the music of the piob-mhor echoes over the fields of Flanders and the deserts of Egypt, through the ruined colonnades of Grecian temples, and is even heard in the African jungle.

GOLFERS FROM THE SEA

IF you have been squatting on the sea bottom not a mile from Heligoland for two days and have been fired at and chased and otherwise inhospitably received, you naturally crave for some form of recreation. That explains why the Z. 77 is vainly endeavouring to call up H.M.S. *Outrageous*, and also why her signalman is muttering cutting remarks about the somnolence of signalmen on bigger ships. From the vitals of the submarine comes a voice, "Got 'em yet, Evans?"

"'E's just woke up, sir," says Evans, and proceeds to spell out a message with the aid of two large semaphore flags. This is the message: "Lieutenant X., *Outrageous*,—Will give you two bisques and knock spots off you.—TUBBY."

Half-way through the receiving signalman on the big ship became wildly excited. "And 'im twelve years in the Navy and can't send biscuits right," he snorted. Then he left the bridge and dived below to where a rather bored kitten and the gunnery lieutenant were amusing themselves with a piece of string and a ball of paper.

"Message from Z. 77, sir," said the signalman, standing in the ward-room door. "Received 9.27

a.m. Will give you two biscuits and knock spots off you.—TUBBY.”

For a moment the lieutenant looked as puzzled as the signalman at the message. Suddenly its meaning dawned on him. “Say that I will pick up Lieutenant Watkins in five minutes,” he said, “and, by the way, that word wasn’t biscuits. You let your mind run on food too much, Semple.”

A little later a cutter called at Z. 77 and took the two officers and their golf-clubs ashore. As they landed on the narrow beach a tall Major of Marines sauntered down and gazed with open hostility at the kit of clubs slung over each shoulder. He addressed the gunnery lieutenant. “What were you doing in the Great War, daddy?” he said mildly, and departed under a shower of small pebbles. The Marine officer had to work, so it was entirely a case of sour grapes with him.

An extraordinary thing is this craze for strenuous amusement possessed by the average Briton. On the way up to the first tee the golfers passed a football ground where twenty-two brawny “matlows” were sweating and puffing in the endeavour to force a ball between two upright posts. Yesterday most of these men had come tearing through the Cattegat with an excellent chance of striking anything from a mine to a “U” boat on the run. They had had but little rest in the last three days, and normally they should have been sleeping the sleep of the just. It is the same behind the lines in France. The natural antidote for hard work and overstrained nerves is hard play, and so these men, who should by rights

turn in to their bunks and hammocks directly they come back to harbour, don flannels or shorts, and spend lavishly all the energy that has been left to them after a week of watching in North Sea weather. As our two golfers tramp the links the commander of the *Outrageous* is stretched full length amongst the heather lining the bank of one of the Highland streams ten miles away. Below him in a deep brown pool is such a trout as will make his reputation in the ward-room for all time, and he is painfully wriggling to a position from which he can lob his fly gently into the ripple above.

The submarine man's drive from the first tee is long and low, with a run that takes him within easy mashie shot of the green. The gunner's ball rises at an angle of about sixty degrees to an extraordinary height, and falls to earth so close to the tee that its thud as it hits the turf is distinctly audible. "That," says he pensively, "must be my maximum elevation." And so they play light-hearted as schoolboys. Their golfing talk is mixed with the queer jargon of the Navy. "Guns" calls his cleek his secondary armament, and the other man talks in a like way. "I will now submerge," he says, as he faces his ball in an attempt to hole a five-foot putt. But he doesn't. At a blind hole "Guns" is again troubled. "These indirect drives are the very devil. It's like smacking away at Maidos over about ten miles of Gallipoli." He had been on the bombarding squadron out there. It is only a nine-hole course, so when they have played once round they start off again.

At the sixth tee a perspiring orderly appears with

a message. The submarine man reads it and groans. "I'm off," he says, and off he is, leaving "Guns" to finish his game alone. . . .

Well out in the North Sea an ugly craft wallows in the swell. She has an assignation with a small black-funnelled destroyer that presently appears. Bashfully the submarine sinks below the waves like some coy maiden discovered bathing. Her periscope alone remains above the surface. The former golfer is standing with his eye glued to the lens of the graticuled periscope sight. He is satisfied, and suddenly there is a thud and a rush that tells that a torpedo has started on its way. The tanks are filled, and the boat submerges completely, waiting for the concussion of the water that should follow. She stays down the allotted time for the range, but nothing happens, and slowly she rises again to the surface. As the periscope prism gets above the water and catches the target in its field, the golfer looks disgustedly at the smudge of smoke that marks the retreating destroyer.

"Sliced, begad!" he says, and gives the order to return to harbour.

That night, in the ward-room where he is dining as a guest, the commander tells the tale of a Brobdingnagian trout that dallied with a coachman and toyed with a blue drake, until by wonderful strategy it was hooked, only to get free after a Titanic struggle. "My fish got away, too," muses the submarine man, but he doesn't tell his story. It is a commonplace beside the commander's.

THE BATTLE CRUISERS

THERE are those who lament the loss of all that is beautiful on the sea, and scathingly compare the modern Liverpool tramp with the three-decker of long ago. They ask you to look at the peeling paint and rusty sides, the squat masts and canted derricks, and against these they hold up the white decks and whiter sails, the yellow masts and yards of the ships of long ago. And comparison finds the palm awarded to the old-timer.

But there is a new beauty, a beauty of strength and power and speed that has been given us in the modern war-vessel. In a northern port the morning mists rise slowly, unevenly and through the uncertain haze the lead-coloured silhouettes of great ships loom up. These are no walls of oak. They are gun emplacements of steel, ponderous and forbidding if you will, but with a beauty of their own. And as the haze lifts the eye lifts with it, following a vista of ships as far as sight may carry. Unwieldy funnels, tripod masts, fire-control platforms, hellish weapons in steel fortresses appear in long lanes.

It is as though the curtain had been unrolled to show the very incarnation of war, the climax of

man's devilish ingenuity. It is a city of steel with its streets, its squares, and its by-ways, the home of many souls. High above these floating fortresses spider-web wires stretch from mast to mast, the nerves of this huge fleet. On the quarter-deck of one ship a man walks meditatively, his hands clasped behind him. He is very much a man. True he has an extra inch of gold lace on his sleeve, the breast of his blue tunic is brightened by coloured ribbons; but he is a man who might pass unnoticed amongst his fellows. Yet at a word from him 200,000 tons of steel is galvanized into life, huge screws churn the water, and the bow waves of many ships froth up to the hawse-pipes as "The Fleet" puts to sea. He gives the word, and the spider-web wires catch the distant spark and sputter of his signals. He is the brain of the Fleet, and the nerves of steel transmit his desire for action to this city upon the waters.

It oppresses, as a dream oppresses, and the immensity of it all is too great to grasp at a moment's notice.

A brisk destroyer glides down the Channel like the pilot fish to some huge shark following behind, and a cruiser in all her pompous might, ominous, threatening, crowds close on her heels. She is grey from masthead to water-line, and her monotony of tone is accentuated by the gaily coloured string of bunting that flutters upon her signal halyards. As she passes, a flash of light from the bridge winks through the thinner mists as a searchlight stutters out a message

to the smaller fry. Forward, amidships, and aft, great guns in pairs explain the reason of her being. In the old sense of the word this is no ship: rather a floating platform for huge weapons that throw 2,000 lb. of steel for ten or fifteen miles when one man tightens his finger on the brass pistol grip in her turrets.

Sheer sides, flat decks shorn of projections, and guns, always guns, are her outstanding features. It seems ridiculous to think that she floats at all, this great dead weight of metal. A bugle rings out short and sharp, and bare feet patter on steel ladders and wooden decks. Her hatches and companions vomit men. A wailing whistle, the seemingly ineffective pipe of the boatswain, conveys more than words. Six hundred men have been told in six unmusical notes what is wanted of them.

Up on the bridge the midshipman of the watch is filling in time talking to a friend about his last dance on shore. The decorous arms of the semaphore spell out the details of a scene laid in a conservatory in which figure a midshipman, a *pêche* Melba, and a girl. The yeoman of signals is writing near the telegraph, and the squeak of his pencil on the slate seems incongruous.

Far below a lieutenant mounts a bar-runged ladder to the top of "Q" turret and disappears through the steel canopy. Three men follow him. Inside there is the roar and rattle of moving machinery. The eye fails again. Levers, wheels, voice-tubes, and dials fill all the wall space and much of the interior. The

lieutenant bends down and turns a wheel. From a pit below comes the clang of metal on metal, and a massive lift tosses a shell sixty-two inches long towards the breech of the port gun, a thing of steel and brass five feet through. The breech opens with a half turn, and then one realizes that the devil must be in this machinery. With a rush, a chain rammer roars up from its vertical position behind the gun. It is like the chain of a bicycle, only its links are six inches through and are made to bend only one way, like a man's fingers. From the perpendicular it runs along horizontally, propelling the mighty projectile into the gaping maw of the waiting gun.

The process is repeated, but this time the rammer pushes in behind the shell the two great silk bags of cordite which send the ton of steel on its way. The last is sent home, the breech swings on its hinge and slowly turns, locking with the turning. A man approaches with a metal tube, not a span long, and inserts it in the breech centre. All is quiet again save for the noise of the hydraulic machinery and the overflow of the orders shouted into the copper-mouthed voice-tubes. There is a terrifying roar, none the less fearful for the fact that it is sustained and muffled, and the huge gun darts back with the recoil of the explosion. More slowly still it resumes its normal position, and almost before it has stopped its forward motion there is another shell waiting for the breech to open. And that is war—from one end. At the other there are the gaping decks, the

blood-stained floors and walls, the inrush of water, and the death cries of men made in the Creator's image.

Above the voice of the range-taker calls the ranges. "Ten eight hundred, ten eight-fifty, ten nine hundred," he calls monotonously, and one realizes that miles away is an enemy for which are destined these bolts of fire.

It is not always that these great ships steam self-confident down the Channel. Sometimes they come limping back to port, decks aslant and scarred, and then it is that the great dock caissons are opened and they go to sick bay. Ten years ago the plover and the tern circled above the low, flat banks of this great northern river. Where once was heard only the cry of the waterfowl there is now a mighty naval dockyard. Men have delved huge pits in the black mud and lined them with stone and mortar. Changing banks have been stayed and shored with granite, and the insane chatter of the pneumatic riveters has driven the whaup to the lowland moss hags. A huge steel door slowly swings open to admit a ship that has "gone sick." With infinite patience and care she is warped into her place, her stem pointing to the exact centre of the far wall of the dock. By evening, propped and shored, she is revealed in all her immensity, her swelling hull, her great screws, the overhanging flare of her bows giving one the idea of force and speed. Far below in the dock bottom pygmies with sledge-hammers shore up the keel blocks with wedges.

A short, heavily-built figure walks briskly along the caisson top. His hair is grey, but his stride is young. He typifies energy, and his voice is one of those voices which were made for the time of Peter Simple. It rings clear above the din of machinery as it would above the noise of a thirty-knot gale. It is a voice that is meant to give orders above the crack of bellying sails and the snap of halyards on yards and masts. This is the man for whom all this machinery starts its agitated chatter. It is at his bidding that the men swinging the heavy hammers in the dock are sweating, and when one sees him one scarcely wonders at the prodigious activity of it all. This man is a surgeon of metal, a dispenser for all the ills a ship is heir to. They come to him halt and maimed and go away cured.

As with the Fleet the vastness of it all finds one at a loss. Roget's "Thesaurus" has not synonyms enough to express its bigness or the infinite variety of its detail. There are machines that gibber at you as they chip away bronze and iron as a wood-carver would cut kauri pine. There is one that chews steel plate and spits the fragments at your feet; another that cuts clean holes through half-inch steel as an office punch cuts papers for filing. A saw-toothed ribbon of steel bites deep into a half-foot rod with the ease of a boy's fretsaw cutting cedar. And the men working all these things talk to each other and carry on a conversation amidst a maniacal clatter that beats on the ear-drums like a masseur's vibrator.

Not all the work is done above in the sun's light. By the entrance to a great dock two men turn unceasingly at the wheels on either side of a brass-bound box from which a pipe leads into the water. Twenty feet from the boat in which this air pump is being worked the water is constantly disturbed by streams of bursting bubbles. A diver is below removing débris that is blocking the caisson, the dock door. Presently he emerges, heavily lifting his 40-lb. leaden-soled boots from the water. Again it is the Navy at work, ubiquitous "Jacks of all trades," but masters of them all. Specialization is the essence of this ubiquity, but it is not carried too far, and the man who takes down the engine of the steam pinnace to-day may be sending 2,000 lb. of metal towards the War Lord's Fleet to-morrow. "All cats catch mice on these ships," says the Admiral. In action the padre, his clergyman's collar contrasting strangely with the war machinery at his hand, gives out the ranges, and his voice does not change. But for the fact that there are no hymns numbered "ten eight hundred" he might be thumbing the leaves of Ancient and Modern.

And so we leave this harbour of Mars, but we go away in a different frame of mind from that in which we came. When we wax patriotic and musical we sing that Britannia rules the waves. It may be cheap sentiment, but patriotism is like golf, the man who is playing the game can boast about it without bad taste. Over all is the idea that this is but the

flying squadron of the great Armada of Britain. We may not rule the waves as yet, but our glass is rising, and when the pointer shows "stormy" we may rest assured that to us, at any rate, no harm will come as long as the morning mists rise above this great grey Fleet.

BUILDING THE WARSHIPS

IT is the Glorious First of June. One hundred and twenty-two years ago to-day the English Fleet under Lord Howe cleared its decks for action. Gun ports were opened, powder was brought up from below, and the gunners, stripped to the waist, passed the round shot from hand to hand, from lazarette to the batteries. The day ended with victory.

To-day, nearly a century and a quarter afterwards, England is fighting side by side with her foe of the First of June. The decks of her ships are again cleared for action, but they are different ships these. The walls of oak are gone. We now have walls of steel.

Have you ever lain awake in your bunk in a steamer and thought of all the work that must go to the building of such a vessel? You listen to the throb of the screws, the squeaking of the hull as it takes the strain of the heavy seas, the steady rhythmic beat of the engines. Above your bed the steel plates are neatly riveted, and you wonder who it is that puts the ship together and unites all the multitudinous parts that form its entity. It is easy for the layman to think out the making of each separate particle of such a construction, but it is the combining of them that seems almost beyond the power of

mortal man. I have seen on the Tyne and the Clyde the men who do these things and more: the men who build and equip the fleets of Britain. The merchantman is a work of months, and the brains of many men go to her making, but the battleship is as different from the tramp as is an alarm clock from a ship's chronometer. The man who builds a battleship has to build a hull that has to stand not only the strains of the seas, but the titanic forces of the great guns, and the energy of engines equal to the horsepower of a fleet of tramps.

By the river bank is a towering mass of steel and iron. It is almost, not quite, a battleship. She has been launched from the ways about a month, and now a hive of workmen swarm about her tall sides and buzz and clatter in the great hull. She is the embodiment of all that man has put into this business of killing his fellows that he has taken up so seriously of late years. The bows, as sharp as a knife, curve upwards until one would almost think that she must topple over. She looks as if she were made to cut the seas and spurn them past her sides, and in reality that is what she will do. Her decks are iron, for all wood planking has long ago been discarded. A shell landing on wooden decks would start fires, and for this reason these new decks are of steel.

Looking from the bridge to the bows one is impressed with the enormous length of these ships. From her gun turrets to the flagstaff on her bows there is nothing to take away from this effect. Not a winch or a fan intake breaks the clear space. To

the outsider this seems the embryo stage of a ship. It is not. We have seen the real beginning of a warship. She begins her being on paper, and from the paper plans are made wooden models of her many parts. Then one sees the vessel in molten form as the glowing crucibles spill the running metal into the moulds. At this stage turbine castings, gear wheels, and bed plates begin to take some sort of shape, and from now onward they never vary much. They come from the moulds rough castings and go through many stages before they are assembled, but each unit has now its final shape.

These are the beginnings of a ship. The clumsy hull on the river side is really the last stage but one. It is finished as to its shell, and now waits for its furnishings of guns and engines. The sheer sides are red with paint, put on, surely, by some post-impressionist, and the steel plates still bear the chalk marks of the man who fitted all this conglomeration of metals together. In the shops a man chalks mystic hieroglyphics on a steel plate, and with that writing the plate becomes part of a ship. Where you now see a few letters and numbers, you know that in a week or so there will be a gun-mounting, a range-finder, or a fire hydrant. I envied that man with the chalk. It must be satisfying to walk over these huge hulls and with a movement of the fingers decide where even a ring bolt must go.

The spectator looking at this prodigious activity would think that all the industry of the river must be centred here, but he would be very wrong. For nineteen miles the waterway is given over to the

forge and the workshop. Steaming up the river one goes through a lane of giant slipways and huge scaffoldings. Spidery cranes tower above the roofs, or run backwards and forwards on overhead railways. It is an astonishing thing about the really big crane, that the greater the weight that it can lift, the more topheavy and unsubstantial it looks. One sees loads of 200 tons being transported the length of a shipyard on a wire, so thin that it is almost invisible from a little way off, suspended from a trellis work of steel that seems as if it would collapse if a high wind caught it. At one of these yards is a crane that will lift an express locomotive from the Tyne high-level bridge! For nineteen miles this waterway is dedicated to Vulcan. On either bank the hulls of ships of war are building, and above hangs the smoke pall from the countless furnaces.

The work goes on always, and never for a minute does the din and clatter cease. As darkness falls flares are lit, and dawn sees tired men still bearing their weight on drills and riveters after hours of heavy labour.

THE GRAND FLEET

(Written on the eve of the Jutland Battle.)

IN the policies of an old Scottish castle there are two rusty cannon, long thin culverins, bearing on them the arms of Spain. Once they grinned from the gun-ports of a great galleon, and a queer trick of fate has decreed that once more their muzzles should point towards Britain's fleet. And so it is, for out in the offing there lies a host of ships, waiting patiently for the time to come when the sea-power of the Hohenzollerns will be crushed as utterly as was that of the proud and haughty Philip.

We have seen the battle cruisers. They are the fast hounds of the chase. They hunt by sight and to them comes the swift work of the day. The battle-ships of the Grand Fleet are the heavy hounds, kept back until the time comes for the game to be pulled down and killed.

The Grand Fleet base is not near a big town. The harbour where its ships are moored is surrounded by bleak hills. To get to it one must go by sea, and the easiest ferry is a destroyer.

A destroyer is a narrow box of steel with one very sharp and one very blunt end. It has the engines of a trans-Atlantic liner, and its funnels would fit a

cruiser. When it goes fast it settles down on its stern, cocks its fore-foot out of the water, and prepares to enjoy life. Its whole attitude is suggestive of the utmost contempt for the mere twenty-knot craft. When a destroyer does thirty-five knots the seas coming plentifully over the side hiss and sizzle as they hit the hot funnels. In the middle of the ship there is piled a miscellaneous collection of torpedo-tubes, searchlights, ventilator cowls, and life-rafts. They are arranged with the artistic effect of a heap of spillikins, and the two narrow strips of planking running round this pile are called by courtesy the deck. Some destroyers behave better than others, and, indeed, there was one that was famous for her indelicate evolutions. It is said of her commander that he was wont to part his hair in the middle, and that he always stood in the exact centre of the bridge so that she would balance the better. A destroyer has another peculiarity. She leaps away from a standing start like a sprinter. Up on the bridge the commander gives an order and a man winds at a handle. A pointer moves round a dial and down in the engine-room another follows it, showing to the man who watches below the required revolutions and speed.

Away behind lies the white wake. The water races along the ship's sides and closes behind her stern, throwing a white feather high above the after-rail. Over a mile behind us the wake still shows white. Then another destroyer cuts our track, and the two white lines make a gigantic X on the calm sea.

Presently we come to the harbour entrance, where a dozen trawlers hold up a net and boom. Nature has been kind in providing this natural base, but the boom is necessary to keep out those who would come unbidden fathoms below the surface. "Blow one blast," orders the commander, and the syren gives an asthmatic cough. A square of bunting flutters to the signal yard. This is the password for the opening of the gate in the boom. Inside the nearest trawler a man is telephoning to the flagship, saying that we have arrived.

And then the fleet unfolded itself. In this great harbour it seemed as though all the ships of war in the world had been gathered together, and moored in long orderly streets. It was like a town. I used the same simile in writing of the cruiser fleet which we saw earlier in the week, but I was wrong. The cruiser fleet is a village compared with this gathering of vessels. Like a town, too, there are the small suburbs, where the unpretentious, but none the less useful, trawlers and drifters are congregated. Then there are the lordly, arrogant battleships, each like some huge floating castle. Surely every class of ship that ever slid off the ways is here. There are ships with one, two, and three funnels, and ships with no funnels at all. Some of them have two big funnels and one small; some two small and one big. To the layman this method of distinguishing the various classes comes naturally. The Navy men use it too, but in addition they know the arrangement of the guns, the rake of the masts, and a hundred and one

other peculiarities not noticeable to the landsman. Every gunnery officer carries tucked away in some corner of his already overcrowded brain the silhouette of every class of ship in the German Navy. Some day the shape of a turret or a funnel will decide the fate of an enemy battleship, as she looms up uncertainly through the fog of the North Sea, one time called the German Ocean.

High in the air floats a kite balloon, like a sausage that has been too well fried and has bulged at one end. It is tethered to a ship far beneath by what looks like a strand of cotton. This balloon acts as a gigantic periscope, for below it hangs a cage in which three men watch the far horizon for the dim shapes that represent the enemy craft. The men up in this balloon have no room to sit at their ease. For hours at a time they stand with their eyes to powerful glasses. They are the eyes of the fleet themselves. I spoke to a man who had been in one of these cages when the winch on the ship below jambed and refused to haul them down. He and two other men had stood in the basket from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon. They were hauled down at last, hungry and tired but cheery. All that this man would say of his experience was that he was a bit "fed up." But that is the way of the Navy. Little things do not count, and a man who comes off a long watch after a tearing, nerve-racking run through the Channel mists says no more than that. Quite likely he has strained his eyes for three hours or more, watching for the stern of the next ahead, knowing that a

moment's flagging vigilance means a wet death for all his ship's company.

The ship to which this balloon is moored is a freak ship. She has one mast aft and three funnels. The two forward funnels are placed one each side of a great runway. It is from this wooden skid that the sea-planes wing their way towards some spot where they drop their freight of bombs. Perched on her decks like Brobdingnagian insects are three planes. As we pass her, a steam derrick rattles and a plane is swung over the side. Scarcely has it reached the water, than its propeller is revolving rapidly. The wire rope supporting it is slipped like a greyhound's leash, and away it races, gradually rising until it leaves the water and circles high above. We in the destroyer are going at what seems a phenomenal speed, but the plane sails to the far end of the harbour, turns, and catches us as if we were standing still. Then it circles down, taking the water like a duck, its pontoon floats, leaving white tracks on the still surface.

Every Englishman knows that the Army has traditions for each of the old regiments; he knows that regimental colours bear their battle honours; but not everyone knows that our ships of war have their traditions handed down through the centuries. If Nelson were to come back he would find that the names of his immortal ships had been perpetuated in the fleet of to-day. Between the forward guns of one of the biggest battleships there is a list of battle honours that starts with the Armada. In letters of gold her

record is displayed; Armada, 1588; Grenville's Fight, 1591; Bugia, 1671; Quiberon, 1759; and Trafalgar, 1805. Near the turret stands a young lieutenant. He is a man of the typical naval type, but it is his name that stirs memories. He is a Grenville, a direct descendant of the man who served his Queen so well in the little *Revenge*, and the ship this Grenville serves on is the *Revenge* also. His is not the only name that brings back historical memories. There are Howes and Hoods, and many more who are keeping up traditions of race that the German can never understand.

Down in the ward-room the talk is of London, a town almost forgotten by some of these men. In one corner "Guns" is querulous, and demands of the mess steward what he has done with the bitters bottle. The steward explains that bitters has run out. "Well," soliloquizes the thirsty one, "we will just have to have a cocktail without bitters. Ugh! That brings home to you the horrors of war, doesn't it?" he demands. And yet this man fought through an eight-hour action and was saved from a sinking ship to spend months in hospital. I wonder if our enemies have the same cheery outlook!

So commodious is this harbour that the battle-ships can carry out firing practice with all but their very heavy guns. As we look through the open port there is a dull roar, and away to starboard a white splash rises leisurely in the sunlight, and drifts away in thin spray. Two battle cruisers are practising with their secondary armament, the six-

inches. Several reports come in quick succession, and plumes of white water rise above the trellis target which is being towed by a trawler. We venture the remark that it is interesting. "Oh yes," says someone airily, "but that's only the little stuff."

It was once my good fortune to see the "big stuff" in action. It was not a practice shoot, but the real thing. Two-thousand-pound shells were being hurled against the Turkish trenches. One round would alter the whole configuration of a ridge, and the débris that went hurtling skyward was sometimes gruesome in the extreme. This was the *Elizabeth* firing. She lay out half-way between Anzac and Imbros. A heavy brown cloud of smoke would belch from her side, then would come a roar that shook our trenches, and then the shell, screaming overhead like a lost soul.

And so we said good-bye to the fleet as the destroyer raced between iron headlands to the sleepy little town that has so suddenly had greatness thrust upon it. Not one of us but was happier than when we came. The Navy man is a great optimist, and his optimism is of the infectious kind. If only some of the pessimists who air their views over the breakfast-table could see the sights that we have seen, their views on naval tactics might undergo some startling changes.

As we neared the little harbour where we were to disembark, a petty officer waved a large hand at the distant fleet. "If the Kaiser saw that there," he said with emphasis, "we'd never have no more chance of a

scrap. And if he does come out he'll never come out again."

Now that was not boastful, it was sheer optimism. The difference between the two is that the optimist knows that what he says is true, as this man did. That should be the spirit of Britain.

THE OLD INN

THE day was hot and still, and the clouds, few that there were, looked like great burst cotton-pods stuck on a blue background. They did not move, and there was little or no shade until I came to a long, leafy stretch of the road with a bank of soft heather inviting me to rest. I lay down and shut my eyes.

I do not know how long I lay there, but it was dark when I got up and hung my pack again on my shoulder. It was a soft night, and I footed it happily down the road until I saw a light from a window, and heard the sounds of singing coming through the little diamond-shaped panes. The inn was a low-roofed, half-timbered building with a pleasing lack of symmetry. I knocked at the studded door, and a stout, red-faced man in a duffle suit opened to me. The firelight struck outwards from behind him and made play with his features, keeping them in movement as if he laughed one moment and was serious the next. He waved me courteously to a seat by the great fire, and a big man and a smaller moved along the ingle bench to make space for me. The room was low, and the black oak beams were not above a hand's breadth above a tall man's head. There were rushes on the floor, and a long oaken table ran the

length of the room, not so far from the fire-nook but that the men there could reach for the leathern mugs that stood on it.

The big man next to me buried half his face in his as I looked at him, and drank a deep draught. His eyes twinkled over the jack, and when he had rubbed the drops from his beard he turned to me.

It was then that I saw that he was dressed in a fashion strange to me. He had baggy breeches of coarse cloth running to below the knee, where his stockings were gartered with knots of faded ribbon. The sides of these breeches were laced and ornamented with the same ribbon. His feet were encased in shoes without heels but with stout soles. His coat was of plum-coloured cloth, and across his chest was hung a bandolier from which swung on strings a score or more of cartridges that must have been meant for the long wheel-lock musket that leant against the wall a yard away. His hat lay on the floor beside him, with feathers curling round the crown above the soft brim. His face, brown as a dry hazel, was much lined and scarred along the right side from the nose to the ear.

This was the man who had been singing as I came in, and the words of his ditty ran through my head again as I looked at him. It had been something about a Flanders mare and a long, hard road, and it went with the swing of a march. It was the smaller man who spoke first.

"Welcome, sir," he said; "we are sadly in need of a third to this party, for we see by your coat that you are a soldier, but of what regiment I cannot tell.

My friend here is such another, so we are all three soldiers. Indeed, it was of the wars that we talked, and we were even now engaged hard on a discussion as to the merits of the pikeman and the musketeer. I hold to the Spanish fashion, and would have pikemen to musketeers as two-thirds to one, for the pike is the queen of weapons. It is not your smelly tubes of iron and dangling cartouches that will turn the resolute foe. He dare not face a pike, though, and a pike takes no harm from foul weather or any wettings it may get in the crossing of rivers or assault of moated holds."

"Heed him not," said the other man, cutting into the conversation with a voice like a trumpet; "he knows not of what he speaks, and has been a captain of pikemen for a score of years and will die one. To my mind this matter is as yet not illumined with the light that will one day be poured upon it. You may scorn your bombards, but how can a pike kill at three hundred paces? At Jemmingen, under that great captain and great rogue Alva, I saw with mine own eyes seven thousand Netherlanders gathered to their fathers by the muskets of the Spaniards, and of the Spaniards there were but seven who died. Mayhap it was butcher's work, but it was the musket that made it possible. Four years later, with Mondragon, we crossed the sea arm to Tergoes while the tide was at the ebb. We with muskets had perforce to march some ten miles, the waves buffeting our breasts, with our weapons held over our heads and our cartouches and matches and powder horns tied to them. Tergoes was ours with little fighting, and the onslaught was

of the nature of a surprise. There again the pike would have been but a feeble arm. It is petronels for the cavalry, muskets and fusils for the footmen, and bombards and hooped pieces for the cannonier. Thus will wars be won in time to come. In the onslaught or onfall the pike will win its way, but powder and ball will make and mar kingdoms. A double handful of powder, thirty bullets of lead, and six feet of slow match will bring down crowns. A hag woman in Flanders foretold to me that she saw the sky red as blood with the flame of cannons and her ears were made deaf by the chatter of the muskets. It was many years from us, she said, but it would come and the smell of powder would foul the wind of France from the English sea to the Switzers' mountains. There would be cannon that would strike down a man ten-score musket shots distant, cannon that would blast walls of stone as the waves dissolve a heap of sand. We will not live to see it, but there will be those that will."

He reached for his leathern jack and took a long pull. I could hear him swallowing and see his Adam's apple coming up and going down again as the ale was swallowed. Then he put his head in the ingle corner and shut his eyes, and was presently snoring hard. His companion had done the same thing some minutes past, so I shut my eyes and rested my head on my arms.

When I woke I was still on the bank of close heather. I rose, hoisted my haversack strap over my shoulder, and trudged on down the road. It was almost, but not quite dark, and soon I descried a

small, half-timbered inn nestling under the shelter of two great elms. The light from a cheery fire streamed through the diamond-shaped panes, and there was a sound of singing as well. The door was opened at my knock and a hearty, red-faced man made me welcome. In the corner were sitting two men, an infantryman and an artilleryman. They moved up for me as I came in.

The artilleryman pushed his khaki cap further back on his head and waved a dictatorial finger at his companion. "You mark my words," he said, "it's artillery that'll win this war, and no mistake, It's guns all the time and more guns. The bayonet and the rifle is all right for the attack, but the only way to beat the Germans is with guns." And he raised the pewter and drank thirstily.

HEARD AT SEA

Drake is fighting for England again,
Pinnace and Galleon are at it amain.
In foul weather and flying scud
There's reek of powder and smell of blood.
Hear creak of yards and crack of sheet,
The patter on deck of unshod feet.
Day or night you can hear a fight;
Lie by the cliff and it's just as if
The Don and El Draque were at it amain—
It's Drake fighting for England again.

AS it is my own particular village, I will not give you explicit directions how to get there, but you cannot get to it by train and the roads forbid the motor-car. It is a little half-moon village with a stone quay edging the cluster of brown houses. There are red-sailed boats and brown-faced fisher-folk. There is a miniature ale-house, the sign of the Dragon, named for El Draque or Sir Francis, whichever you please to call him. You go down into the village by a hundred steps, past drying nets and piled oars and masts from the little craft in the bay. Turn to your left and skirt the crescent until you come to where the stone quay ends and the beach begins. There is a scant hundred yards of this, and then the path rises, fringing the cliffs. Climb up and on until you get to a little green mound with a stone set atop

of it. Then sit down and fill a pipe. If you do not smoke, then you will miss much, for tobacco is at its best up there in the fresh, sweet air. This is how I went to the place a few days ago.

I had not been sitting long when I heard a voice behind me and, turning, saw an oldish man standing back of the mound. He had a thin grey beard that showed up on his brown face like white orchard moss on brown apple bark. He had heavy gold earrings in his ears and he smoked a small-bowled, thin clay pipe, black and shiny, which he fondled lovingly.

"A good-morning to you, sir," he said as he sat near me.

"Good-morning," I said. "Are you from the village?"

"One time I was," he answered, "but I live up there away now," and he pointed to the little church which now stands alone on the down, but which was once the centre of a village like the one below. "D'ye hear it?" said the old fellow suddenly. "You can hear the roll of it. It's just as he told us 'twould be, and it means what he said, too."

"Those are the guns in France," I said, for you could hear them muttering ceaselessly over the water.

"Guns?" he said smilingly; "they're not guns. It's the drum rolling—Frankie's drum, as he said it would. He's afloat again and away up Channel."

He carefully knocked the ashes from his pipe and I passed him my pouch, which he had some difficulty in opening. He filled his pipe and pressed the red-

hot dottle from the ashes of his last fill on the top. "This is a quaint weed, surely," he said. "'Tis soft in flavour, but sweet smoking. This of mine now is not as new as it might have been once, but it was brought to this country in the Heart's Desire in her last run from Virginia. Benjamin Capel, master mariner, is as good a judge of tobacco as he is sailor or fighter. Many a packet of good brown leaf he's brought me, and once Frankie himself smoked some of it with me when he lay at the Dragon. There's the drum again! Listen to it, listen. It's a sign for all of England's enemies, but it's mostly a sign for us, so I take it. That's as he meant it, I think. When we hear it we are to remember all we fight for. Some say we fight for the present, some for the years that come. Both be right, but I have a mind we fight for the past as well. It is not every nation that can say so, for many of them be upstarts. Listen here o' nights and you will hear it all. There's the sound of cannon and the crash of shot through oak timbers. I've heard it, with the cries of the dying and the maimed. I've passed the shot in a chain of hands from the locker to the guns. See that old iron there?"—and he kicked a rib of iron in the stone slab by his feet—"that's part of the basket of Cliff Beacon that I lit with these hands night of Armada's coming. Then I got me down and joined Frankie. Yes, that's Drake, his drum sounding—there are no two ways about it. It's not the guns in France. And it means we win as Drake won."

Saying this, he turned and bade me good-bye. "What's your name?" I called after him as he went

down the far slope of the mound. "John Treadwell," he called back.

I got up from the mound, for it was time to go, and I thought I might as well walk back with my acquaintance. But when I went to the other side of the knoll there was no one in view, and that was strange, for the country was flat and the path stretched away towards the church.

I walked under the little lych-gate and through the churchyard. I do not know what led me aside, but I stopped to read the writing on a grey headstone:

HERE LYES THE BODIE OF
JOHNNE TREADWELL,
OF THYS PARISH,
WHO DIED ON HYS SHIPPE WHEN FIGHTING THE
SPANIARD.

As I went back through the village the innkeeper greeted me.

"Guns be noisy this morning, sir," he said.

"Those aren't guns," I said. "That's Drake's drum."

And I left him gaping after me perplexedly as I climbed the steep stone steps.

THE RIBBON

UPON fine mornings it is my habit to walk at my elderly leisurely pace upon a certain path-way in Kensington Gardens.

Among the few frequenters of this pleasant spot is Marjory, who is five years old, and my very good friend. She is wonderfully patient when my imagination fails to follow hers in all its flights. She holds, I think, that much should be forgiven me on account of my age.

Some months ago Marjory confided to me that she was very dissatisfied with her father's taste in dress.

"He *will* wear that stuffy old uniform," she said, "and it's simply hidjus. It's such a hidjus colour. If it wasn't for the bright buttons he simply couldn't wear it at all. I said to him, 'Why don't you have one of those dear little bits of ribbon on it? It would look much nicer.'"

"And what did he say to that?" I asked.

"Oh, he just laughed," Marjory replied. "He said, 'If they gave me one of those ribbons it would only be by mistake.'"

That, as I say, was some months ago, since when her father and his "hidjus" coat have been somewhere overseas.

This morning, as I was taking my usual stroll, I

became aware of small but rapid footsteps behind me, and, turning, found Marjory in hot pursuit.

"Daddy's come home," she cried, almost before she was within earshot, and she proceeded to drag me to the nearest seat. When Marjory has important news to impart, she must be dancing, first on one foot and then on the other, but she prefers her audience to be seated.

"Daddy's come home," she repeated, "and what do you think?"

I said I couldn't think at all.

Marjory stopped dancing for a moment and spoke with tremendous emphasis.

"You know what Daddy said about that bit of ribbon? *Well, they've made that mistake!*"

THE FUNERAL OF RICHARD LLOYD

(*March 5, 1917.*)

THE body of Richard Lloyd, uncle and foster-father of the Prime Minister, was laid to rest on Saturday in the village cemetery at Criccieth. Until a few weeks ago few people in the outside world knew of Richard Lloyd. For all that, he will go down to history, not entirely with reflected fame, but for qualities and achievements of his own. For fifty years he was pastor to the little church of Criccieth, and in all that time, until his last illness, he missed but three Sundays at his pastor's desk. He led his congregation until three Sundays ago, when old age claimed him, and he took to his bed to die with a jest and a prayer on his lips.

Those who were privileged to be in Criccieth on Saturday morning saw a scene that will be with them for all time.

It was a grey day, and drops of rain fell every now and then. The mist played about Snowdon, and, a mile out at sea, obscured the grey waters. Long lines of white breakers rolled up the shingly beach far below, and the Black Rock was every little while veiled in white foam, as the tides lapped and curled at its base. Past the village lies the little cottage where Richard Lloyd lived and worked.

Above it stands the old castle, and the Cobbler of Criccieth was like that castle. He was immovable of purpose, and a picture of strength even in old age. A hard life had left its marks on his face, but there were hidden behind a stern exterior, a softness and a sweetness of manner, just as, hidden behind the hard, grey castle walls, there are grass and flower covered mounds.

The village people, quietly reverent, had gathered at the foot of the road leading down from the house where the old man spent his last days. They assembled in the graveyard as well. The little funeral procession followed the hearse down the hill and up again, a scant three hundred yards to the graveside. The Prime Minister walked behind the hearse, and with him were his son, Major Lloyd George, and his brother. The whole attendance at the cemetery was not above a hundred people, and so simple was the ceremony that a stranger, coming on it unawares, would have missed its real significance. It was the very keynote of democracy. Here was the most highly placed man in the world's greatest Empire burying his foster-father and uncle, the village cobbler.

The mourning party, not twenty people, stood alongside the grave, the Prime Minister to the front. He stood with his head bared, and the expression of his face was the index to his feelings. The wind ruffled his grey hair, and the few drops of rain fell unheeded as he stood with his eyes cast down, listening to the appreciation of the dead man spoken in Welsh. The soft accents of the speaker were heard in perfect

silence, but they struck home. The well-measured periods toned in with the deep diapason of the surf on Black Rock. Then the pastor said the Burial Service, and the Prime Minister walked to the edge of the grave and looked down at the plain oak coffin. He walked from the cemetery bare-headed, and so down the hill. An old road-mender, who remembered him as a boy, looked after him, and took off his hat as he passed, muttering a blessing that is both prayer and praise in his own tongue.

Down in the village there was paid a tribute to the dead man such as few men that come out into the world ever receive. This man of sheltered life, was known to all these simple folk, and they talked of him in honest superlatives. He was a man who might have made the same mark on the world as his foster-son, but he preferred to let his light illumine his own small circle. How many men can mould character as he did ? How many men can set themselves to learn an unknown language alone, and then teach another ? How many men can stint and save with one object, and that the making of another man ?

He has left his legacy in the being of another man, and he has left memories that will make this little village in the Welsh hills a place of pilgrimage in days to come.

A GOODLY HERITAGE

THERE was a good man once, who lived in one of the States bordering the Great Lakes. He lived in an atmosphere of shotes and hominy, and in his youth, he used to loll against the verandah post of the store and whittle sticks with a clasp knife. At last he was called to his Maker, and as he lay on his last bed of sickness the pastor from a neighbouring township came to see him. "You will be in Heaven in a little while," he said consolingly, but the man did not seem enthusiastic. He was worried, and when the pastor asked him why, he replied sadly, "I do wish I'd not put off seeing Niagara!"

That story has a moral, flippanant though the tale itself may be, and the moral is that until the things we have near at hand are unattainable, we never appreciate them. To a colonial this is very strikingly illustrated here in England. I met a man last week in Piccadilly. He asked me what I was doing in the afternoon, and I told him I was going to see the Tower. "Funny thing," he said, "I've been in London thirty years, and I've never seen the Tower. I'll come with you!"

We in the colonies have an idiom that always puzzles the uninitiated. Way up in the bush you meet a man driving a buggy and pair. He wears saddle-

tweed breeches and a felt hat, a soft shirt, and a bronze complexion. In the course of conversation he may tell you that he is going home next year. You know what he means. He means he is coming to England, to Piccadilly Circus, to Bond Street, to St. Paul's, and the Abbey. A year later you may see him at a West-End hotel, immaculate in faultless evening clothes. He is "at home," and looks it. What is more, he cannot understand the apparent, only apparent, lack of interest the average Englishman has in his own country. It is not until you have made your home in many climes, and with varying fortunes, that you can appreciate all that England means.

Looking back I can remember many places where I have lived, but few of them were homes. Many of them were places of great happiness and beauty, where life was good to live, but all the time there was something lacking, and that something you find here amid your century-old houses and churches, your quaint, crooked streets, and your pocket handkerchief fields of wheat and pasture.

If you had ever been in the Southern Pacific through a lazy summer, you would know the solidness of your heritage. Out there you may lie on the schooner's deck, thinly clad, below stars that are but a few hundred feet above your head. The sea is calm, but the sound of the lazy waves on the reef soothes with its monotonous music. Even you seem to hear the rustle of the palm fronds on shore. A tropic moon rises and silhouettes the island against its disc. From off shore comes the sensuous chant of the islanders with its soft words, sounding like falling water.

Fish splash in the water, and the squeak of a block as a rope is pulled on a nearby ship sounds uncanny and incongruous. Your pipe smoke leaves your lips and goes straight up in the moonlight. Utter content should possess your soul. But it does not, and it is well for you that it does not. There are men on those beaches who have listened to languorous voices calling and blending with the noise of the surf on the coral reefs. They are there for always, and they buried their redemption what time they cast off their last collar and "took to the mat."

Walk, as I have done, through the narrow streets of the East, past the open shops where dark-skinned men sit and tap at their copper work, where the saddler sews the red-leathered donkey saddles, where the sherbet-seller clanks his brass gongs, where the veiled women with jet eyes and graceful carriage pass to and fro. Sleep on the Nile below some towering temple, and watch the shades of the sunset, wake and watch the tints of the dawn. Home is not here.

Wander at night through avenues of giant evergreens, festooned with white clematis and blood red rata. Watch the twinkling stars again through the clearings above. Listen to the gurgling of the mud geysers in the manuka scrub. Walk into the township through the wide streets with their board-fronted shops and houses, and still, although this is the land you were born in, and the land you and your fathers adopted, it is not your home.

Then come to England and find your home. Here, high above the smoking city, in a house three centuries old, with queer twisting stairs and panelled rooms,

sit at your ease with a book, and a pipe, and a warm fire. The roofs outside are painted with snow, and the footfalls in the street sound soft on the winter carpet. This is home. Here are all the ghosts of your fathers. In the tavern at the corner they plotted for the restoration of their king, or for his downfall. Crowds cheered the Virgin Queen in the streets below. From the rise behind, other crowds watched the City burning, and the "deadcars" dumped their freight by the plague pyres. This is really home, every Englishman's home, and no matter where he was born, no matter where he has lived the most years of his life, it must always be so.

This is our heritage and yours. That we love it, the last bloody years have shown. So when next you see a man in uniform, wearing the soft felt hat, or the springbok or maple leaf badge, do not smile at him if he wanders your streets with the look of a pilgrim, who has lost his staff and cockle shells. That is what he is, so wake to the fact and look round yourself. You will find that there are many things in your own home that you have not valued at their proper worth. See that you do not leave it, like the man who had never seen Niagara, until too late.

FINDING A FRIEND

HE and I left together, and for seven long hot weeks we were in the same troopship. We had the same discomforts all the way through, and the same pleasures. When the ship rolled lazily through the oily swell of the Indian Ocean, her stem scattering the countless flying fish like tinsel showers, we lay on the horse-boxes and basked in the sun until our skins were mahogany colour.

We lay out on deck of nights, thinly clad, watching the low-set tropic stars and listening to the rush of water in the wake of cold fire fanned by the vessel's screws. Off Colombo we smelt the same shore breezes, the good smells and the bad blending into an Eastern atmosphere so new to us. We wandered, much as children would, through the palm groves fringing the shore.

One night we sat beside the Virgin's Well at Matarieh listening to the creak of the Sakhia wheel, and the plash of the cool waters falling from the pottery jars on the endless rope. The muezzin called, and his sad notes rang out from the minaret above the mosque, where he bade the faithful assemble for prayer, and his call, a creed proclaimed above the house-tops, and without fear or scorn, took our talk

into new channels. Thus we got to know yet another side of our friendship.

From the high ramparts above the citadel, we watched the great disc of the Egyptian sun go down over the silver ribbon of the Nile. As it dipped into the dust of the desert, that hung in the air low down it was like the magic of alchemy, for it transmuted the silver of the river into red gold.

Again, we marched the desert where the khamsin wind came up in restless eddies, nosing amongst the sand like hounds at fault. We fought there, too, but it was a fight in which we had all the vantage, so that there was no credit in it. But before many weeks had passed we were in a different battle, one that lasted but six days for me, and for him seven long months.

The last I saw of him was when he walked down to the beach beside my stretcher, and waited outside the dressing station to see me safely into the barge. He nearly choked me trying to make me drink from his scanty store of water. Then I lost him.

* * * * *

And now, after two years, I have found what became of my friend. Going down from the great house, from the laughter on the terrace, from the chatter of the children beneath the yew arbor, I found a steep path leading towards the river bank beneath a tunnel of green leaves. Pine needles carpeted the way and softened my footsteps. The little wind among the tree-tops was not strong enough to send a sound so far below.

I came to a walled-in garden under a great bank on which pines and cypresses grew. A walk of marble mosaic ringed a green oval, and sunk in the grass were a dozen headstones. On one of them was his name. It is a spot such as one dreams about, and in the still of the evening I looked out from this sunken garden through a gap in the trees across the river, where rolling green fields, red cattle, and the smoking cottage chimneys looked like a picture in a dark green frame. It is a good place in which to lie, for it has perfect peace and beauty.

When it is my time to go out I could wish for nothing better than to lie near him in that cool garden of rest.

THE TALKING OAK

(The woods at Oxshott, planted at the time of the Napoleonic alarms, are being cut down by Canadian lumbermen for war purposes.)

DOWN in the pine-woods the shade is cool and pleasant. I went to a little clearing that I know of and smoked a thoughtful pipe. It is good to lie flat on the grass and use all one's senses. One can hear the murmur of the little grass insects and the lazy drone of a humble-bee. On this day I heard another noise—the whish-whish of cross-cut saws, biting into the green pine trunks. Then from a hill across the valley came the sound of a buzz-saw. Its plaintive note sounded like the whining of a giant mosquito. Its cadence rose and fell, swelled and shrank again to a thin treble, as the trunk, rough sawn, fell apart, and a new one was put to the teeth of the blade. Some one was singing to the lighter strokes of a trimming-axe in a clearing below me. I could see the gleam of the sun as the steel rose and fell like the winking of a heliograph. To the right there ran a long swath through the forest like the first cut of a reaper and binder through ripe corn. This giant road, plumb-straight, ran away over the hill out of sight.

A slight wind stirred the pine-needles, and the trees made conversation one with another. A pol-

larded oak (I distinctly heard it) whispered to a tall pine: "You've no cause to complain," the oak said; "you are realizing your ends. I remember when they came and set you in the earth. You striplings have crowded me out of the sunshine, and because you are at last made use of you expect sympathy. I've been here these three hundred years. Self-sown I was, and the men came down and planted you when I was tall enough to look out over the Roman's Camp. The trees of London town sent down word to us that there was talk of war and need of timber, but not real timber. The men wanted a quick-growing tree and soft to the chisel. Couldn't see any fool using you for planking in a three-decker. No three deckers now? I know that well, but wood is wood, and, as an old forester once said as he sat on the turf below me, 'Wood will come again for ships. These iron plates hammered together be all too frail. They'll sink at the knock of a round shot.' I remember there was some one, name o' Boney, who wanted this country for himself; and people, far-seeing but, mark you, no judges of proper timber, planted you for ships and barracks and wains to carry powder and such like. The charcoal-burners worked hard that year. . . . That time's past? Stuff and nonsense. I tell you Boney's scare was as nothing to the war that rages now. See yonder cutting? Well, all those trees have gone to make telegraph poles beyond the water. Some to Egypt, some to farther afield yet. The enemy we fight cuts all telegraph poles into foot lengths when he leaves a place. No, that can't happen to you, for you'll be put up

to carry wires behind our front. I have a friend, an oak of course, in Whitehall, and he sends me word of the war. It is going slow, very slow, but so did Boney's war, though we won it in the end. My friend says that there will be many wooden ships sailing the seas again: Then they'll want us. They'll want stout timber, and we'll go as our brothers and fathers went before us—what better billet than to sail the sea bringing food to women and children? It's what I've been brought up to, root and branch. We have always served England as a family, we oaks. Hark, here come some of the new woodsmen."

Three men, in soft felt hats and khaki shirts, came through one of the rides. One carried a pot of paint and a brush.

"That's likely timber," said one of them, pointing to the complaining pine. "Guess he'll do. Blaze him low down." And a white paint-ring is drawn round the rough bark.

"What about this oak?" asks another man.

"He's no use. You'd need a jig-saw to cut him up. We need long timbers and straight." And the men went on down the drive.

The oak sighed dismally.

"Every oak has his day," said the pine spitefully. "You'd look nice as panelling—if they could get a straight three feet from your zigzag trunk. What they want now are the straight timbers—heard 'em say so. You're like the yew, your ancient friend, a contemporary of the bow and the clothyard shaft. Men don't fight nowadays in Lincoln green, or sail in three-deckers. You're all behind the times. I,"

he finished importantly, "I shall be at the front in three months."

"It's all very unjust," said the oak sadly; "these new men don't know good timber. Anyway, you were meant for war and you'll go, but I——"

But then the wind dropped suddenly and he was silenced. The buzz-saw screeched shrilly, and the man with the trimming-axe began a new song.

THE MYSTERY OF MERRIDEN

BEING A TRANSCRIPT OF SOME OLD PAPERS FOUND IN A
CHEST IN AN ATTIC OF THE PRIORY AT MERRIDEN,
NEAR MONKHAVEN.

IN the first place, I would have you know clearly, that I have no wish to set down on paper what I am about to. It is as if I were compelled in the matter, by some power that cannot be denied. Nor would I ask your credence, for a tale that is so manifestly outside the range of things accepted by men. So it is then, that I merely crave of you patience and the wit to listen, or read silently, when you may, and you wish it, condemn or praise the author as you think fit. I am no maker of tales or legends, nor am I handy with the pen, being always more to the fore with the sword than the quill. With the latter, I have no trick of fence, nor any method of disarming my reader than to thrust him with the point. For that reason I will take my story from where it begins, and fight my way through it as the thoughts come to my head.

You must know that after the sad days of the Forty-five, now twelve years gone by, and after the Butcher of Culloden had filled the long graves by the wayside with the bodies of the men of the clans, I came southwards out of Scotland to the shores of

Sussex to where my maternal uncle had a holding at the Priory of Merriden, near the town of Monkhaven. Now proscribed as I was, and with a price, though most small and inadequate, on my head, I bethought me that it were best that I should rest quiet there for a space, nor be seen overmuch, nor talk to those about. For this reason I was much thrown into the society of my uncle, whose soul may God give rest, though that I doubt.

My uncle was a dour man, and of few words. He was in speech as he was in looks, hard, rugged, and uncouth. He had none of the openhandedness of the land north of the Border, but you might eat his meat and drink his wine, or leave it, as you pleased. In the matter of this world's goods he had more than sufficient store, for he ever spent sparsely with the one hand, and gleaned the while with the other. But that must suffice. Of his character my story will tell you more than these words. I must take you back to a night nine years ago, the night of December 24, 1748.

On that evening, my uncle had sat at supper more dour than ever, and with a restlessness that set me thinking in a vain endeavour to account for it. The day had been a bitter one, with sleet and a wind the like of which no man thereabouts remembered, and there were many there whose years had topped the four score. Out from the windows of Merriden, one could see the grey sea, and once, towards the noon hour, when we walked, my uncle and I, near the shore, we saw, battling against the stiff wind, a ship which every little while was hid in the driving

spray and spume which the wind whipped from the waters as it would thistledown from the glebe.

"It's a poor day for yon ship," I said to my uncle, "I doubt me that she will weather it out."

"Maybe she'll not," he said.

Now there was nought in the words themselves, but the manner of his speech caused me to look at him in wonder, so venomous had been his utterance of them. Although he betrayed little interest in his answer, his actions were contrary to his spoken word, for ever and anon as we pressed into the wind, heads lowered and our feet unsteady, he would half turn and gaze seawards intently. At last he spoke again.

"It'll be the *Mary of Plymouth*," he said, "Jacob Ensor is her master."

"God help him," I said devoutly enough, for I was afraid for the ship.

"Hell's curses on him," my uncle answered, and he spoke withal in such bitterness and with such venom that I said no more but walked in silence to the house. Later as it neared sunset, my uncle again went to the shore, where he stayed a long time, returning to say, "She's making her way, so that come the darkness, she may steer by Fairlight Beacon."

"Then she may win through yet," I said with some hope.

"And she may not," said my uncle.

Came the darkness, and with it a more bitter wind yet. My uncle sat long at the evening meal, and the bottle at his hand was renewed three times ere he rose from the board. Nor did he eat much, being, it seemed, overwrought with excitement. Now, drink

in that measure, with but little meat to fill one's stomach, is not calculated to make a man steady either in his head or on his feet, yet he rose soberly enough, and bade me good-night with great solemnness of manner.

I snuffed the candles, all but one, and read to myself some four Psalms of the Scots metrical version, which same it seems to me suit a man's every mood, just as on this night they fitted to the organ music of the blast outside and the patter and drive of the sleet on the windows and the roof.

Towards ten of the clock I rose and went to my chamber, nor took long to get into my bed. As I lay, without turning my head, I could see plainly, the flaming cresset of Fairlight Beacon by which I knew the *Mary of Plymouth* might be making for safe harbourage. I was soon asleep, but later I woke to the sound of shod feet on the oaken stair, and later again I heard the unlatching of the door, and the rush of wind into the hall. Sleep claimed me again, but not for long. When next I woke, it was with a sense of vast unease, and looking through the window, my breathing was checked by what I perceived. The beacon still burned, but it was through the right window that I now saw its flame, and not through the left, as it had been before.

With haste and a great fear at my heart, I donned my clothes and shoon, and wrapped a plaid round me. I ran to my uncle's room, but found it untenanted. A candle burned on the floor by a large chest that stood open by the bed, the lid thrown far back, and the contents trailing from inside on to the floor.

They were for the most part dresses of silk and of satin and brocade, and it came to my mind that they were once my aunt's and that he had kept them by him, out of memory for her, when she died as a girl of twenty. As I turned to leave the room, I saw on the table at the bed's foot the picture of a woman most beautiful to see, like those that had lately become the fashion again, painted upon thin ivory, and framed in a circle of plain gold.

Half running, but sometimes utterly stayed by the wind, I made my best pace towards the flame of the shifted beacon. Of a sudden, I saw there the figure of a man feeding the flames, from a pile of sticks near at hand. It was my uncle, and his face as it turned to me made my blood run cold, and my hair tingle under my bonnet. His gaze was like that of some wild beast, so malevolent and full of hatred was it, and I instinctively drew away from him. As I did so he made towards me, and picked up a cudgel from the ground as he ran. I was unarmed, and with some thought of getting him with the fire-light in his eyes, I circled round him, but he turned as I did. There in the flickering light of his wrecking fire, we watched each other like two swordsmen playing for an opening. I can see it all now, nor am I at all like to forget it as long as I draw breath. It was ghostly, weird, terrifying. The wind whipped the sparks from the fire, and the wood crackled and spat as the rain splashed upon the flames. Of a sudden he rushed at me, and I sprang back, only to be caught by the heels by the bundle of faggots, from which he had been feeding the fire. Then I saw him

swing the cudgel aloft, and I closed my eyes. I knew no more until I woke to consciousness with my head tingling, and a ringing in my ears, like all the church bells in Christendom. I was bound by the ankles, and my wrists too were tied behind me to the iron handle of the great chest in the hall of the house. I was so weak, that I had little desire to move, but I was so tied as to be entirely helpless. There came a sudden noise of wind, and the great door of the hall flew back with a clang of its loosened bolts. All this I could hear only, for I was around the corner of the passage, and away from the hall itself. Then the door shut again, and the bolts were slid home. That there was something strange to be seen I knew, for I heard the sound of something being dragged across the flagged floor, and many groans, very soft and pitiful. Then there was the click of a spring latch, and the sound of a panel being slid very quietly back. There was no mistaking the noise for anything but what it was. The dragging began again, and ended with a thud and the sliding of the panel again.

For a while there was silence, and then arose an eerie voice that I scarce recognized for my uncle's, chanting, droning some words which I could not at first catch. Soon they came to me more clearly by reason of a lull in the storm outside. It was part of a service of Communion, as laid down in some English church-book that I minded having once peeped into, and I could hear over and over again the words repeated, "Cursed is he that stealeth his neighbour's wife."

For many minutes this went on and then I swooned

again. When next I was able to hear there came the sound of a spade working in hard earth. Presently there was a long drawn scream, high and full of terror, so that it frosted my veins like a chill wind, and a cold sweat came to my brow. Again there was the sound of something falling, and the spade worked, mingled with the clatter and swish of thrown earth. Came more shrill screams, though muffled, as through a closed door. In half an hour perhaps, by the tall clock that stood near me, all these sounds stopped, and the panel was slid open and shut again. There came footsteps across the flagged floor of the hall, and my uncle presently stooped above me and cut my bonds. He was a big framed man and strong, and he picked me up, for I could not walk, and mounted the stair with me to my room. My head swam and I could scarce see, so weak was I. He put me on my bed and there left me. Afterwards I could hear him moving about in his chamber, and there came to my nostrils the smell of burning cloth. I could hear the fire roaring in the next room, and my uncle stirring the blaze with the great poker. I knew no more until I woke six days later in a high fever with the surgeon at my bedside bleeding me. It was four weeks before I was about, and could come down from my room. When I did so I passed into the hall with a shudder and an evil foreboding. My uncle spoke less than before, and soon took to his bed where he lay for ten days and then died, firmly refusing to see a priest.

Lest you wonder why I set all this down on paper, now I tell you. Since that night, there have been

many others when I have sat in the hall at Merriden (for I was left sole heir to the estate), and have heard the sound of something being dragged across the flags, the sliding of the panel, and the noise of a spade at work in hard earth. My hair would stand on end stiffly, and my heart freeze, and then, e'en though there was ne'er a fire in the house, there would come to me the sour smell of burning cloth. At first I rushed about the house in a frenzy of impotent fear, thinking to explain away the troubles that seemed to beset the place, but one night, as I passed through the hall, I saw a wet mark trailing from the door to the wall of the outer bay to the left of the door, and the wet trail was such as would be left by the dragging of a soaked body across the flags. God help me if all the time I have been privy to these horrible happenings, but if there were murder done, the murderer was dead, and what could I have done but run my head in a noose if I had ventured to acquaint others of it. There was still a price upon my head, and I lay hidden for no jest of my own, so I let matters bide. Now I am leaving this accursed house for my own place and home acres, on the shores of Loch Fyne, my estates, and the estates of my father, having been restored to us by the English.

Note added by a Different Hand.

I also have heard these sounds and seen the wet mark five score years after this above was written, and yesterday I caused the panelling to be stript from a certain place in the hall where, behind, we found a small secret chamber, with a wooden floor

from which three planks had been removed and piled in a corner. There was a spade there and a horn lanthorn, and when we dug we found the bones of a man, and a silver whistle such as master mariners were wont to carry as their badge of rank. There were portions of tattered and rotten garments and shoes with big silver buckles, but nothing more. I have caused the remains to be interred decently in the churchyard over against the house, and I devoutly pray they will there remain in peace. Certain it is that I am not now troubled by the manifestations that once harassed me.

PUDDYPHAT

THERE was a Sunday afternoon calm over our part of Sussex. It was late autumn weather of the best, and, although the leaves fell with rather more persistence than a week earlier, there were still a few belated butterflies fluttering about the apple-orchard. The bees were gathering the last of their honey and a few rabbits below Heron's Gill had obviously got their winter coats out of cold storage. They looked as fat again with their extra fur about them. So quiet was it that the sound of rooks could be heard from Mill-clack Rise where they circled above the trees. Suddenly on the breeze, light and fitful itself, there came a new sound. Puddyphat, the bailiff, looked to the sky under a hard and sunbrowned hand. "Eeryoplanes," he muttered, with something of resentment in his voice. But the noise became louder and more persistent. There was a metallic clatter that no aeroplane could make, and it came from the long hill to the west of the gates. Then topping the rise came a puff or two of white steam, and a great gaunt traction engine hauling three trucks clambered down the hill, to stop outside the drive entrance. Puddyphat the bailiff stopped down his tobacco with a cracked forefinger, slowly relit his pipe, and got up, more slowly still, to walk to the gates.

There he stopped and surveyed the invading machine with intense disfavour. It panted fitfully, and there was the hiss of escaping steam from a valve. The engine was certainly a wonderful one. It was the biggest the bailiff had ever seen. Later at the Eight Bells he told Flitch the gamekeeper to Mill House that at first he thought it "were one o' they tanks." It was resplendent with new paint and its wheels were painted in strange colours. There were three men in the nearest coupled truck, and in the cab was a young soldier with carefully brushed hair, and a wrist-watch which he glanced at as he prepared to climb to the road. "Is this Monkscombe?" he asked the bailiff cheerfully.

"It might be," answered Puddyphat cautiously.

"Well, we're coming in here," said the driver of the engine, who was dressed in khaki, "Don't think much of your gateway; it's a shade narrow for my bus, I think. Which post do you want left standing, anyhow?"

"Don't 'e knock any o' my gateposts down, young feller," said Puddyphat, and then suddenly; "What be 'e a-comin' in here for, anyway?"

"Twelve tons o' hay," said the engineer cheerfully as he climbed back to his cab. "Mind your little posties, and stand away there—she sometimes kicks at strangers."

He clanged a lever home and the flywheel revolved. The leviathan gave a lurch or two, slewed round to the turning of the worm gear, and shaved the near gatepost by a bare three inches, while Puddyphat got back into the long grass by the drive-side. With

many grunts, and much squeaking and jarring of couplings, the train ambled down the steep drive to the stackyard, with Puddyphat protesting loudly as he kept his eyes on the deep-cut wheel tracks it left in his none too hard road surface. He arrived in time to find the engineer and his men making friends with my bull terrier.

"You cut all my road to ash-dust," he said, "you'll not take her up wi' the loaded wains behind her."

"She'll go up anything at all," said the young man as he cast an eye over the stacks in front of him. "She was made for the Russian Government to haul big guns, guns that would fire from here to Lewes, and she'll never feel your little load. Ain't she got pretty wheels? They're painted in the Russian colours, but it was a waste of paint, for she's not going to Russia now."

"If I was you, young man, I'd just go away and come back with three or four decent waggons and some horses. An' I'd learn civilness to your elders if your officers can't teach it you," said the bailiff.

"Ain't he like the quartermaster?" said one of the three soldiers.

"With his whiskers gone wrong a bit," agreed the driver.

At this final insult Puddyphat retired. "Well, load you the hay yourself," he said bitterly, and went to his cottage, where he sat peeping through a curtain.

All four men took their coats off. In ten minutes they had rigged a gantry, and in another ten the hay was coming aboard the first truck. They worked healthily, and smoked with utter unconcern amongst

the hay. The young engineer sang lustily, and fragments of his ditties reached the bailiff where he sat watching the dwindling stacks.

"You'll never be dull down here,
With plenty o' bacey and plenty o' beer
You'll never be dull down here,"

sang the engineer. Once Puddyphat came out to remonstrate. "That's no Sunday song," he said severely; "but, then, you'll be from Lunnon." It wasn't a question, it was an accusation, but the engineer answered as the bailiff had done, "We might be," and winked tremendously at the other three.

At the lunch hour the young driver sat facing Puddyphat's cottage with a paper of sandwiches on his lap, and a neat flask by him. He unstopped this and poured out three drinks for the other men, took one himself, and put it back on the hay beside him. Presently Puddyphat opened his door and emerged. "Have a drink," called the engineer, "there's one left." The bailiff decided that it would be churlish to refuse, took a tot that made the giver's eyebrows go up in admiration, and tossed it down. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and expressed his approval of the drink. "It should be good," said the engineer, "it's some of old Alfold's best. He sent me a case."

"Might that be Lord Alfold?" said Puddyphat.

"The very same," said the engineer, "he's my uncle."

"Then you bean't a common engine-driver?" said the bailiff, mightily impressed, and the other three tittered. From that time on a truce was signed,

and when the hay was all loaded Puddyphat gave them tea in his cottage. Just before they left, the engineer offered Puddyphat his flask again.

"Be there anything in it?" he asked suspiciously.

"Sure thing," said the driver, "it's like the widow's cruse."

"Where might she have gone?" asked the bailiff as he unscrewed the stopper.

Just before dusk the engine and its trucks slewed round the corner by the stackyard, neatly took off one swingle-tree of a big blue painted farm-waggon, and rolled away up the drive. Puddyphat leant on the gate as they went up the hill and waved good-bye to the men. He rolled his tongue lingeringly round his mouth. From the rise of the road there came back the engineer's song:

"You'll never be dull down here
There's never a doubt, there's never a fear
With plenty o' bacey and plenty o' beer
You'll never be dull down here."

And so on *da capo*.

Puddyphat paused at the stack ramp on his way back and looked at the few straws left. "They certainly do shift un," he said.

MAKANATA'S CHARM

AN old man and a boy sat by the lake margin in the hot sun of the antipodean summer. The wind came across the water, frosting it a little, and then rustled away through the ti-tree, playing games with the soft feathery steam that rose from the boiling pools behind Tokaanu. It was very quiet, and the waves of the lake barely whispered as they laved the hot white sand of the beach. Far off in the marches amongst the raupo rushes a bittern boomed, and the chorus of the frogs rose at intervals, making lazy waves of sound. In the distance Ngauruhoe, its perfect cone capped with snow, sat proudly beneath the banner of white that floated away northwards from its steaming crater.

The old man was very old, his years were within a few of four-score, and he had a wrinkle on his face for every year of his life. The blue weals of the tattooing ran in and out amongst the wrinkles, giving him a look of great age. His hair was as white as the silica that fringes the Blue Sping; his eye was like the brown bracken on the hills above Waihi. The boy was his very opposite. Young he was, and of a fine figure, with a strong jaw line and high cheek-bones that were emphasized by the flat nose of the Maori.

"I know not what manner of war this is that you go to wage. It is a *pakeha's* (white man's) war, so it may be a stern one, as ours was with them. But they fight well, as I know. You are a son of the Ngatiawa and can wage war with the best, for thy father fought and he was my son. My father fought also, and well. When you leave this country to go over the water, you go to pay no debt; but there has been much slaying of women and children by these men that the English fight against, and we hold not with that. We owe no debt to the *pakeha*, for they have despoiled the Maori and brought sickness amongst them where there was none before. They brought the *waipiro* (fire-water) from over the sea, and taught our children how to drink it. We were not made for those things, and the soft life and the *pakeha* food and drink has spoiled us. Still, you are strong, and I think should render good account of yourself. Henare, who can read, tells me that the war is a terrible one, and that there are more men slain in the course of one day, than in all the days of our wars put together. That may be so, I know not, for Henare is a liar sometimes for fun. Remember that your fathers have always fought a clean fight, and do you likewise.

"And now I have something to give you. It is a great charm, and one that I have carried always with me from the time I was given it. You must know that we fought the *pakeha* for many months, and at one of these fights near Waitara Pah we killed some of his soldiers and wounded many. One there was that was the captain of the big rifles, the *artirere*,

and he was a *rangitira* (a chieftain) amongst his people. After the fight, I and seven others were coming down through the bush when we heard a crackling of the underbrush by the path. Waka Tamaira, who led the file, said, 'It is a pig,' but I was of another mind, and looked through the vine-stems to where there was a big rata-tree. There in the shadow of the trunk was a *pakeha* soldier, his red coat torn and bloody, with his face white as dressed flax. He was crawling, dragging his legs over the ground, and very weak. I bade him stop, but he went on, and Waka would have shot him but I hit up his musket, and the shot only rattled amongst the branches. We went to the man, and by the marks on his coat I knew that he was a *rangitira*, and of the *artirere*. He was not afraid, but tried to get to his feet to wrestle with me. Then his spirit left him for a time and he fell to the earth. So we took him up between us and carried him to our village, where the women made ointments of the berries and herbs to put on his wounds. And for a while he stayed with us; but it was winter, and he had been shot through the chest, and soon his coughing shook his whole body, until I thought each night he would not see the morrow's sun. One night he sent for me in his *wharé* and I went. He had a few words of our tongue, strangely twisted, and I could find his meaning sometimes. I sat beside him, where he lay on his bed of flax mats and ti-tree branches, and he put his hand into the neck of his coat and brought out a charm. It was on a chain of gold, and round it were stones to make a frame. It was a picture of a woman with hair the colour of

wild honey, and a face such as his own, with a soft colour as of the sky at sunset. This he gave me, and told me to keep it until I had a son to give it to. Then he put his hands in mine, and his face said all the thanks that he would have put in words. I put the charm round my neck, and sat still until the dawn light came through the door of the *wharé* and his spirit had passed. Here is the charm. I put it thus round your neck. The chain has long since gone, but the face of the woman and the frame is as it was when he gave it me those many years since. It will keep you in the straight way as a warrior; but it did not save his life, so it may not save yours. Wear it now, for I have no need for it more, and it was a warrior's charm in the beginning."

Then the boy rose to his feet, holding out his hands to the old man and helping him up. They performed the *hongī*, the touching of noses, and the younger man went swiftly away, not looking back until he came to a bend in the path under the hill, when he turned and saw the old man shading his eyes against the sun and looking after him.

* * * * *

It was a cold night in the trenches, and dawn was far off. The Maori boy was filling his ammunition pouches from a case by his side, for he was soon to be in an attack and would need every round. He was in France, fighting beside the English troops, and with them he would go over the parapet.

The time drew near, and the men tightened their equipment, and fixed their bayonets. Presently the

word came, and the line of the enemy trench was lit up by a thousand flashes of light as the German rifles cracked and the machine-guns started their maniac gibbering. The Maori went on and remembered his fighting fathers. There was bloody work where he was, and more than one of the enemy had reason to know that the Maori was no mean foe. After half an hour's heavy work, he sank down in the bottom of a communication trench with the blood from a chest wound trickling warmly down his tunic, to the earth below him. Presently round the corner stumbled a figure, and the Maori raised himself in a vain endeavour to fire his rifle. The man came on and knelt beside the Maori, tearing the first field dressing from the flap of his tunic. But he saw it was no use, and could only stop the bleeding. He was bending over the man when he felt a limp hand thrust something in his hand.

"This is not to be lost," the Maori said. "It is a charm that my grandfather had from a white soldier in the wars they fought against the Maori. He was an officer of the artillery, and gave it to my grandfather because he tended him when he was wounded. My grandfather said his name was Makaanata, but that was what he made of it in Maori, for he could not speak English as I can. It is a charm to make you fight well, but it will not save life. Keep it, for you may find its owner."

And the Maori boy lay still, and his soul went to the keeping of his ancestors.

That night in the dug-out mess of the —th Infantry Regiment, a young subaltern was fighting the

day's battle over again. He had fought cheerfully, and with much profanity all through the action, and now was telling what happened on his part of the line.

"And by Jove!" he said suddenly, "I'd almost forgotten. A Maori who was all shot up in one of the trenches we passed through, gave me a charm. I put it in my pocket and forgot all about it. It's a heathen idol, I expect. Do they have little idols that they hang round their necks? Reach me down that tunic, Potty, I want to have a look at it."

He was passed the tunic, and from the pocket he brought a small miniature framed in rose diamonds. It was hung on a dressed flax string. The face was singularly beautiful, but it was not its beauty that struck the subaltern.

"I say," he said excitedly, "that's like a miniature of a big picture we have of my grandmother at home. Good Lord, it is her! My grandfather was killed out in New Zealand. He was a captain in the Gunners, and the Maoris got him." Then he turned over the frame, and on the other side were the much-worn tracings of a coat of arms.

"Chuck us that map-reader." And with the glass he made out the supporters, two roebucks, and the first words of the motto, "I hope in——."

"I'll have to find out all about this," said the subaltern, and in the morning he was as good as his word.

So it came about that the priest at Tokaanu was one day asked to translate a letter that had come to an old man of the *pah*. Said the letter: "Your grandson died in the enemy trenches. I saw him, and was able to bind his wounds as you did those of

my grandfather. There were dead men of the enemy all round him, and I think he had done his work well. He gave me the charm. It is the picture of my father's mother, and it has come back to us. So you see it was a charm after all."

"Aye, it was a charm truly," said the old man. Though it did not save life it is a charm that makes men fight. Who sends the letter?"

"Alexander Macnaughten," said the minister.

"That was it," said the old Maori thoughtfully; "Makanata, he told me, was his name."

"CARRY ON!"

A NEWSPAPER STORY

Persons in the Play.

INGPEN, *an Old Journalist.*

MACGILLVRAY, *Night Editor.*

WHEELAN,
HILLS,
WATSON, } *Reporters.*

GOLIATH, *an Office Boy.*

The action takes place in the office of the "Sun" newspaper.

A man sits at a table, centre right. He is in his shirt-sleeves and wears a green eye-shade. There are letters and newspapers strewn over the desk, and others overflowing from a wastepaper basket on the floor by him. A telephone is on the desk, and a shaded electric light. On another desk there is a typewriter and a collection of books of reference (Burke's, Bradshaw, Whittaker, etc.) To the left is a tape-machine ticking against the wall, and each side of the room there are files of papers on stands. There are lights over the paper-files. Door at the back of the stage, and a window to the right of it with the blinds pulled down carefully. The man is MACGILLVRAY, the night editor of the "Sun" newspaper, and he is at present

perplexed as to the next day's paper. As yet there is nothing special, and he wants some "star feature." He ruffles his hair and looks through many papers, now and again cutting out a paragraph or two, and sometimes gumming these on to slips of copy-paper.

MACGILLVRAY runs his fingers through his hair, already ruffled, and snaps a pair of newspaper shears over a paper he is hurriedly scanning. Then takes up a typewritten paper.

MACGILLVRAY. Was ever a man faced with so many paradoxes in a newspaper office before? Here we are in the middle of the greatest war in history, and there's not a story worth a black heading to-morrow. When we do get news there's not room in a reduced paper to print it. The best stories can't be published, for there's that sweet little censor that sits up aloft and cuts the news that we get. And has ever Fleet Street seen the spectacle of a newspaper trying its hardest to keep *down* its circulation? I've got a staff of crocks and old men just when we need the fittest men in journalism. Great Scott! it's not journalism now, it's more like dentistry—indeed, I don't know that I wouldn't sooner pull teeth than try to draw news out of some of the men and departments we have to deal with.

Enter diminutive office-boy, lays papers on MACGILLVRAY'S desk and makes for door.

MAC. Goliath!

GOLIATH. Sir?

MAC. I am in a dilemma.

GOL. Sir ?

MAC. As a potential journalist, are you able to suggest something in the way of a star story for to-morrow ? Something that will tickle the jaded palate of the Great British Public at its breakfast-table. Last big story we had, about the German Corpse factory, put it *off* its collective breakfast. Think of it, Goliath ! Think of the disservice we do the State when a story like that leads to the waste of thousands of rashers of bacon—thousands of eggs—thousands of pieces of toast. Shouldn't wonder if we weren't liable under the Food Regulations for being accessories to the waste ! Now, Goliath, if people could only read their papers, say, an hour before breakfast was ordered and cooked, we would effect a *real* saving. We could put in at least three unpleasant stories a week. Have you no idea for a good story ? Come on, now, out with it.

GOL. Well, sir, I did hear a story about a submarine officer what was taken prisoner yesterday, and he had a bill in his pocket dated last Tuesday for the Undercliffe Hotel at Longbeach. He must have been ashore, and stayed the night there——

MAC. Goliath, I asked for help. That story has been the rounds, and every time it is told, it is a different hotel that he stayed at. Last time it was Dover, and I have heard that it was Liverpool, and Ramsgate, and Plymouth. Think again !

GOL. There was a woman last night in our mews who hit another woman on the head with a bottle, and she——

MAC. Goliath, this is the *Sun*, not the *Police Gazette*.

You have a lurid taste as regards news. Can't you give us any views on Imperial Preference, or how long the war will last?

[GOLIATH *exits* and MACGILLVRAY *goes to the files and looks over them, whistling softly to himself.*

Enter two reporters, HILLS and WATSON. Both about same age. WATSON limps slightly.

MAC. Written your story, Hills?

HILLS. Yes—that Guildhall lunch. Usual sort of show. Fat lunch, thin speeches, one whiskey and soda, and one cigar. Makes about a third of a column. I've done you a story about the Vicar of Trafford.

MAC. Is he dead?

HILLS. Great Scott, no! Very much alive. He says the rain and snow we had was a direct visitation from above——

WATSON. Of course it was!

HILLS. Shut up—a direct visitation from above, as punishment for ploughing on Sunday.

WAT. The weather in England is always a punishment.

HILLS. Rot! We've got fine weather now. I wonder what the Vicar will say to that. Probably say this is the beginning of a drought.

MAC. Did you go to the War Office about that story, Watson?

WAT. Did I not! I went round to the counter and filled in a form. They walked me up two flights of stairs and round miles and miles of passages, and then sat me on a chair in front of a door labelled

D.A.A.Q.M.G. Sat there for fifteen minutes, then they told me the man I wanted to see was in Whitehall Gardens. I went there, and they sent me back. I baulked at the stairs, but I spent ten minutes running round the ground floor. Then I went to a tube telephone and rang him up. Got the story.

MAC. By the way, Lady Calomel, or Cammomile—some name like that—wants you to go and see her to-morrow. Wish you'd ask your titled friends not to ring up to my number. Half the female side of Burke's peerage seems to spend its time breathing your name into telephone mouthpieces.

WAT. She's all right. She wanted us to correct a par that went in last week saying that she's nursing at that Hay Street Hospital.

MAC. Isn't she? She's got a good name for a nurse.

WAT. It's not Calomel, it's Callerton. No, she's at Morrison Square.

MAC. Is she really a nurse?

WAT. Good heavens, no! She works the lift, but we couldn't say that. Besides, she dresses like a nurse, and that's all that matters to her.

MAC. Ugh! Isn't she the woman who was going to sell tea at that bazaar until she saw the hats they were going to wear?

WAT. Yes, but they were rotten hats, and she has great taste in hats. She and the Duchess of——.

MAC. I say, Watson, couldn't we have just one Duchess-less day a week?

HILLS. Watty can't help it. You see, they all pass him round as a curiosity. So-o interesting—

“Dear Lady Tosh, do let me introduce you to Mr. Watson of the *Sun*. You will find him *most* interesting. He was wounded in the er—yes—er—in the Dardanelles. He is a colonial, and you and he will get on famously.” And so they do, until Watty tries to touch her for half a crown at the end of the week——.

(WATSON *throws rolled-up paper at HILLS.*)

WAT. Shut up!

Enter WHEELAN.

HILLS. Ah! here is *our* Mr. Wheelan—in charge of our grocery department.

WAT. Still writing food stories, my boy!

WHEELAN. Don't you scoff at the food shortage, my son. You'll be eating bracken-roots and dandelions yet. The Chief's got more sense than you, and he sees a food shortage coming. He's keen on showing up the waste. There's shocking waste going on. Everybody's eating between meals, and big fat meals at that.

HILLS. What did *you* have for dinner to-night?

WAT. Caught out, Wheelan! I saw him tucking in at steak and kidney pie, and he followed it with a pancake, and cheese and coffee.

WHEEL. That's all right. *I* had been *working—brain* work, my boy—I need more to sustain me than you. (*Rings bell.*)

Enter GOLIATH.

GOL. You ring, sir?

WHEEL. Yes, get me some coffee and sandwiches.

GOL. How many sandwiches, sir ?

WHEEL. Oh, two or three.

WAT. You *are* the limit ! Now you are going to strafe the people who eat between meals. You had dinner only an hour and a half ago.

HILLS. I've got something worth a top heading. Story about a man who was discharged from the Army and asked to join up again. He had lost one arm, and the other was hopelessly paralysed. The War Office sent to him and asked him to rejoin his regiment, and told him—what do you think ?—to bring his glass eye with him !

MAC. Right ! Spread on it, and get his name and full particulars.

WAT. Heard the yarn about the German submarine officer——

MAC. Yes, what was the hotel this time ?

WAT. Penzance. You heard it ? Why ?

MAC. Oh, nothing, but I was wondering how far he had got on his tour round Britain. It was Longbeach just now when Goliath told me.

WAT. Well, that's a wash-out.

GOL. (*entering with tray and sandwiches and coffee*). Here's your coffee, sir.

WHEEL. What rotten little sandwiches ! (*Opens one.*) Ugh ! this ham's all fat. (*Picks up paper-knife from desk and cuts off piece of fat, which he puts in the waste basket.*) I hate fat !

MAC. Well, that's about the thickest thing I've ever seen !

WHEEL. (*looking critically at one of the sandwiches*). It's the thinnest I've ever seen !

MAC. Young man, *you* are a fine apostle to preach doctrines of economy! You will now probably sit down and write a half-column about the waste of fats, and unnecessary meals.

WHEEL. (*grinning*). Shouldn't wonder.

MAC. I want you three to hang on for a while. (*Rises and goes to window, pulling the blind aside and looking out.*) Whew, it's as dark as ink! Good night for 'em. We can do with a raid, there's nothing for to-morrow worth starrng.

WHEEL. Any warning yet?

MAC. No.

WHEEL. Noticed there weren't any searchlights, and that's a bad sign. Heard anything?

MAC. No, you young irresponsibles can clear out for an hour, but I want you on hand as soon as I call you, in case there is anything doing. Where are you going?

WHEEL. (*making as if to chalk the end of his walking-stick and then playing a shot at the paste-pot*). Only round the corner. I owe these two a licking. Watty here, made a thirty break yesterday. If you do that again I shan't play, Watty.

MAC. Well, clear out; but what's your telephone number in case?

WAT. City double three double six nine. Ask for Gertie, she knows us.

HILLS. (*who has been reading "Punch" beside the desk*). My hat! I say, have you seen this week's *Punch*, anyone?

WAT. No!

WHEEL. No!

HILLS. Listen to this. "Yesterday was Colonial flag-day in London, and numbers of ladies sold flags in the streets. The flags bore the emblems of the different overseas dominions: the maple-leaf for Canada, the fern for New Zealand, the wattle for Australia, and the *sjambok* for South Africa."

MAC. That's great! What rag is it from? That's one of the best they've had yet.

HILLS. Don't know that you'll think it so funny when you look at it. (*Hands MACGILLVRAY the paper.*)

MAC. Oh, I say, that's too bad. It was ours, and the blighters say so too. Those things are in rotten bad taste. It's not playing the game showing up other people's shortcomings. You wouldn't laugh if someone made that mistake at a dinner-party.

WHEEL. But you said it was one of the funniest they'd had yet.

MAC. Well, I didn't know——

WAT. That it was ours, eh?

MAC. Don't be puerile, you boys. You know perfectly well that the Chief's fearfully keen on South Africa, and that he'll see that as soon as some obliging friend shows it to him at the Club. Pass me that assignment book, and if any of you young blighters have done this thing I—I'll put you on week-end duty for a year.

HILLS. It's not mine, thank goodness!

WATS. Not guilty.

WHEEL. Do we ever make mistakes like that?

MAC. Often! Let's see, when was it? Fifth, eh? I thought so, it's old Ingpen again. It's really too bad. It'll make us a laughing-stock.

HILLS. You wait until the Old Man sees it.

(*Telephone rings.*)

MAC. Hullo! (*testily*). Hullo! hullo! Yes, speaking. Speak up! I can't hear a word. (*Suddenly becoming extraordinarily polite.*) Oh, I beg your pardon, sir.

HILLS. My aunt! the Chief.

WAT. Help!

WHEEL. Prepare for gas attack!

MAC. Excuse me, sir, there's a noise going on here. (*Covers transmitter.*) Shut up, you fools! he's boiling over. (*Uncovers transmitter.*) Yes, sir, I've just had my attention drawn to it. It is, sir, most unfortunate. I will, sir. Yes, sir, I'm afraid it was Ingpen, sir. Well, sir, he only gets little jobs now. Oh no, sir, don't do that. I'll talk to him. Well, Chief, he gets a very small salary, although I know that's no excuse. But I wouldn't like to lose him. We are awfully short-handed, sir, and the three men we have are all crocks. We couldn't get anyone else now. It's only because they've been smashed up that we've got them. No, sir, I'll speak to him and warn him. Good-bye, sir. Oh no, I wouldn't do that, sir. We really can't afford to lose him. Well, sir, perhaps next time, but I hope there won't be any next time. Good-bye, sir.

WAT. Not too much of the crock business! He'll be wanting to sack us if you tell him that. He wanted to sack Ingpen, didn't he?

MAC. Yes, but he mustn't do that. It'd be a shame. I'll have to strafe him, but I hate to do it.

HILLS. Don't be too hard on him. Poor old beggar, he's been on the rag for thirty-five years.

WHEEL. I'd make mistakes like that on the screw he gets. Don't sock it in too much.

MAC. Clear out, all of you. I'm news editor here. Remember that I want you in here within a minute of the time I 'phone you.

HILLS. Right! G'bye.

[*Three exeunt.*]

MAC. (*to 'phone*). Put me on to the reporters' room, please. Hullo! is Mr. Ingpen there? That you, Ingpen? I want you here a minute. No, I want to speak to you. Never mind that for the moment.

(MACGILLVRAY goes to the file, and turns over back papers. Purses his lips, and looks worried. Then he cuts out a paragraph and brings it to the desk, at which he is seated when INGPEN comes in. INGPEN is fully sixty years of age, and very bent. His stooped shoulders are accentuated by the loose coat he wears. His sleeves and the back of the coat are all shiny, and he has a rather uncared-for look. His right-hand fingers are all inked, and he has pinned sheets of paper over his cuffs with paper-fasteners to keep them clean in the office. He has a sad expression and a scholarly look. He has been on the paper for thirty-five years, and was once a good man in the Press Gallery. Time has taken its toll, but his appearance has been much aged by the tear and wear of Fleet Street. He comes across to the desk and waits.)

MAC. Umph! Read that. (*Passes him the cutting.*)

INGPEN. "Yesterday was colonial flag-day in London, when numbers of ladies sold flags in the

streets. The flags bore the emblems of the different overseas dominions; the maple-leaf for Canada, the fern for New Zealand, the wattle for Australia, and the sjambok for South Africa." (*Looks puzzled.*)

MAC. Well?

ING. I don't see anything wrong, Mr. Macgillvray.

MAC. Pass me that dictionary. Now look up sjambok.

ING. "A raw-hide whip used in South Africa, often made out of rhinoceros hide, and used for corporal punishment." Dear me!

MAC. Now look up springbok—s-p-r-i-n-g-b-o-k.

ING. "A species of antelope allied to the gazelle." Dear me!

MAC. You see what you've done? It's really too bad, Ingpen. You are making too many slips. You mustn't fall down over little jobs like that.

ING. (*sadly*). The little jobs are all I've got to fall down on, sir.

MAC. All the more reason for care. The Chief told me to warn you. He's very angry. I had to tell him who did it.

ING. Well, I suppose that finishes it?

MAC. (*relaxing a little*). No, not this time, but don't do it again. Really it was an unfortunate mistake. That's all, I think. I'll want you to hang on a bit. There *may* be a raid to-night, so sit tight. (*INGPEN makes for door.*) By the way, how's your boy in France?

ING. He's not in France now, Mr. Macgillvray.

MAC. Where's he gone?

ING. He's here in London—in hospital.

MAC. (*rising and putting hand on old man's shoulder sympathetically*). I say, I'd no idea—I'm so sorry. Is he bad?

ING. Well, he has one leg missing now. They had to amputate. I *was* going to ask for a little time off to-morrow. They are going to give him his medal.

MAC. His medal?

ING. Yes, he won the D.C.M. on August the seventh. General Hall is decorating him. I'd like to have seen it, but I suppose now——

MAC. Nonsense!—suppose nothing! Have the whole day. I congratulate you with all my heart, both on his medal and on getting him back. What's one leg matter?—you should see them at Roehampton! You'll never know he's lost it when they get him out—he'll hardly know himself. You take the whole day off!

ING. Thank you very much, Mr. Macgillvray.

[*Exits.*

MAC. (*to phone*). Give me Belgravia, three seven nine. Hullo! Is Sir Charles in? Yes—Mr. Macgillvray. That you, sir? I've seen Ingpen. Yes, I did, but he's rather taken the wind out of my sails. His boy's wounded—he's lost a leg. No, he's in hospital—I said he could have to-morrow off. Hall gives young Ingpen a medal to-morrow afternoon.—Yes, he's won the D.C.M. Yes, sir, very proud.—Well, I was thinking of getting the boys here to do something like that—to club together and send 'em both away to the seaside somewhere as soon as the boy can be moved. I say, that's awfully good of you, but it's

enough as it is, sir. If you make it less we'll make it up to that. Well, that's awfully good of you. We can give him a month away on that, and we'll make it comfortable for him. He can come up for the day if we really need him. Good-night, sir.—Yes, indeed I will—he'll like that—he appreciates anything like that. Good-night. (*Rattles receiver hook.*) Put me on to Room Seven, please. Ingpen, you might come in here again, will you ?

INGPEN *enters, very agitated, fearing more trouble.*

MAC. Cheer up, Ingpen ! It's good news this time. The Chief wants me to congratulate you on getting your son back, and on his distinction.

ING. I'm sure that's very good of him, Mr. Macgillvray.

MAC. Not at all—we all feel that way. When can he be moved ?

ING. In a fortnight; but I'm afraid he'll have to stay in the hospital until he's quite better.

MAC. Why ?

ING. Well, you see—well (*hesitates*), the fact is, Mr. Macgillvray, I've only a little top room out Islington way, and—well, it's not good enough for him, I'm afraid he wouldn't be comfortable. I have put something aside so that he can go down to the country for a day or two. I wish I could have him, but you see he was apprenticed in Nottingham when war broke out, and he wasn't earning anything; and I'm afraid he's sent most of his money to me since he joined the Army.

MAC. Good lad !

ING. Well, it may sound sentimental, but I haven't spent very much of it. I've saved it for him. You see, it's his. He will be able to go away for a while on it, anyway.

MAC. I've got a much better plan than that. You need a holiday badly.

ING. Not I, sir.

MAC. *Yes, you do!* The Chief wants you to take the boy away to the seaside for a month.

ING. (*laughing sadly*). I wish I could, but you see it's impossible.

MAC. Don't interrupt. Listen. The Chief wants you to take him away. He says you can take him wherever you like, in *his* car, and he is going to help to get him well, and you too.

ING. But you see, sir, the difficulty is not in getting him there—it's, it's——

MAC. Yes, yes! I know. But we are going to look after that part of the business. It's the least we can do.

ING. I am afraid I can't accept even that wonderful offer. I know it's not charity.

MAC. Look here, Ingpen—you annoy me. Cut yourself out of it. We'll say we're doing it for the boy—he's a good boy, isn't he?

ING. A wonderful chap!

MAC. Very well, then. We're doing it for him. He's been fighting for us and we are going to try and make him fit again. See? You must accept for his sake.

ING. Yes, I know, sir, but it's——

MAC. Pass me that A.B.C. (*Hands it to INGPEN*)

and walks him to the door.) Now go away and study the advertisements in that, and settle on some spot by the sea. Let us know your choice, and we'll fix up the rooms and all that sort of thing.

ING. (*pausing at the door*). Very well, Mr. Macgillvray. But please don't think I'm ungrateful. I wouldn't take it from you at all, except that I know it's for him. There's still no reason for *my* going.

MAC. We've settled that. Can I come and see the lad some day ?

ING. Oh, would you ? He's heard about you for many years, and he'd so appreciate it if you did come. You'll like him, Mr. Macgillvray—I know you will. He's a great boy, and he's so—he was so big and strong. You see, he's my only child, and his mother died many years ago.

MAC. Well, tell me the visiting hours and I'll come along. Does he smoke a pipe ?

ING. Yes, he does, but——

MAC. Right ! (*Pushes him out of door.*) Now I must get to work. Let me know where you settle to go—and by the way, write a little story about the decoration ceremony in the hospital to-morrow. Good-bye ! (*Shuts door.*)

[*Exit INGPEN. 'Phone rings.*

MAC. What's that ? Trunk call. Where from ? Oh, right ! Damn !—are they ? How many ? (*Whistles.*) When did they go over you ? Same old route. Well (*looks at watch*), they're about due here now. Send up any stuff you've got. No, miss, another three minutes, please—why not ? Line's wanted ? Damn ! Right-o ! (*Hangs up receiver and*

rattles hook again.) City double three double six nine. Hullo!—Hullo!—That City Billiard Rooms? Tell Mr. Wheelan and Watson and Hills to come in to the office immediately. Right! (*Soliloquizing.*) What the deuce these gasbags come for when I've only got a short staff I don't know! Three men and old Ingpen—half a man! Still, it's a story for to-morrow.

Door opens and the three rush in.

HILLS. They coming?

WAT. Zepps.?

WHEEL. Where are they?

(Sound as of a bomb bursting outside.)

MAC. *Here!* Wheelan, you go out to wherever you see the biggest bunch of searchlights, or wherever there's trouble. You'd better watch the tubes and trains.

ING. *(entering hurriedly).* Zepps.!

WHEEL. *(sarcastically).* What a guess, Inky!

MAC. Shut up, you! Ingpen, *you* do the tubes and trains—you know, scenes in stations—people rushing for shelter in subways—always do that—go to Waterloo and Victoria. Out you go—and you, Hills and Watson, work together. All three of you get taxis.—You'd better get a taxi too, Ingpen. You'll get round and back quicker. Now off you go.

[Telephone rings as they all exit hurriedly.]

MAC. Yes, speaking. Half a tick. *(Draws pad to him and writes.)* Yes—yes—no, spell it—how many—in a ploughed field—yes. Right! Good-

night. Let's know if they go back over you. (*Rings again.*) Yes—it is. Where? Right! I'll take it now. (*Writes.*)

CURTAIN and short interval, representing an hour and a half. Rises again disclosing MAC. at desk, WHEELAN and HILLS and WATSON at table, writing hard.

MAC. Let's have your stuff sheet by sheet—as quick as you like, and we'll get the second North with it.

Enter GOLIATH precipitately.

GOL. (*excitedly*). Please, sir, I've got to go to Tooting.

MAC. Who said so?

GOL. My patrol's leader's just rang me up, and there's hundreds of bombs dropped there, and we've got to go and keep the crowd back.

HILLS. My hat! Scout Goliath! What's your patrol?

GOL. The Lone Dogs, sir. Last raid I followed a Zeppelin on my bicycle!

WAT. You did what!

GOL. Followed it on my bicycle, sir, all the way to Watsell.

WHEEL. What did you do then?

GOL. Pointed it out to a policeman, sir.

WHEEL. What did he do?

GOL. Blew his whistle, sir.

MAC. Oh, heave him out, someone!

(*HILLS runs GOLIATH to door, and heaves him into the passage.*)

WHEEL. (*sorting some copy paper*). Where's Inky ?

HILLS. Fallen down again, I expect.

WAT. Probably stuck in a tube somewhere.

(*All write silently for a few minutes, giving sheets to MACGILLVRAY.*)

Enter Ingpen, very white, but with jaw set firm, and straighter back.

MAC. Get to work, Ingpen. Give him a seat there, you chaps.

ING. I've written my stuff.

MAC. Written it ?

ING. Yes—I didn't go to the stations.

MAC. What the devil——

HILLS. Told you so ! Oh, Inky, you're a daisy !

ING. (*hands copy to MACGILLVRAY, and sits down at table looking to front*). Read it ! It may be of some use.

MAC. Sit down at my desk ; you look fagged out.

MAC. (*reads silently, nodding appreciatively every little while*). I say, Ingpen, this is a great story. Say, you chaps, Ingpen's got a fine yarn. (*Slaps him on the shoulder appreciatively. INGPEN does not look at him, but still stares straight to the front.*) This bit about the hospital's good. Can you vouch for it ?

ING. Yes, I was there ten minutes afterwards.

MAC. Well, it wasn't what I told you to do, but I suppose it was a case of putting your blind eye to the telescope—eh ! We'll have to put you on *more* descriptive work. You say there were four patients killed ? Got their names ?

(INGPEN *hands paper.*)

MAC. (*reads*). All privates—Casey, Wilkinson, Foley and—— (*Stops suddenly and looks up. Walks slowly to INGPEN, who bows his head on his arms on the table. HILLS, WATSON, and WHEELAN get up ; then, as they understand, WHEELAN beckons to the other two, and they go out quietly. MACGILLVRAY kneels on one knee beside INGPEN, and puts a hand on his arm.*)

CURTAIN.

SANDY'S V.C.

DAVY DOAKE the snobby had been down to Glasgow to see his son away to the south, where he was joining his battalion. He had just come of age for the Army, and Davy had packed him off quick—not that young Sandy needed packing off really. He was all too eager to get away, the more so since Alister, his brother, had fallen at Vimy Ridge, where he was fighting with the Canadian Scottish. It had hit the old man hard, his death, but I doubt if it hit him as hard as the news that Alister, a Campbell, was serving cheek by jowl with men of Glengarry, the hated Macdonalds. You see, Davy himself had a long life behind him, and he had talked when he was a boy with men who had also long lives and long memories, and the matter of Glencoe and the killing stayed in his mind.

It was a cold morning when I went in to see Davy. He was just tap-tapping away at a brogue, with every now and then a dive of his hand into the tobacco-tin in which he kept his brass sprigs. I asked if he had news of Sandy, and he gave me a letter to read from the trenches. It was not well written, and some of the letters were black in places where the pencil had been chewed in search of inspiration. It told of the bitter weather and the mud, the rats, “near as

big as the minister's sheltie," and of the standing to in the bleak o' dawn. It ended with a hope that the brown hen was minding her chicks well, and that the roads were still rough enough to wear out the bairns' boots and make repairs necessary.

"He's a sly yin, that," said Davy, "and he'll nae come to any harm oot bye. But it's a bad war. I'm thinkin' it's the worst war we've had yet, for a lang whiles anyway. You'll no' ken the Crimean War!"

I said that I had read about it.

"Yon was a bad one," said Davy, "and I'm thinkin' it was the Scots that finished it off, as they'll nae doot finish this yin."

"Well, Sandy's there now," I said smilingly.

"A weel, I was nae thinkin' *he'd* be doin' the finishin' off part o' it," said Davy, "but he'll nae doot make a wee bit splutter when he does get intae it. I'm hopin' he's got a guid Colonel, for it makes all the differ to sojerin'. Sandy, for all his cracks aboot the rough roads and the brogues, was ever a wee bit sawney, and I doot he'll mislike this killin' business. He wouldna kill a pullet for last New Year's dinner, let alone a German."

I saw Davy from time to time in the next few months, and one day as I went down to his cottage I met his young nephew, Gavin Campbell, who now and again carried my creel up Donich Water.

"Uncle Davy's got a teeligram," he said breathlessly, "an' cousin Sandy's been woundit an' he's got a medal." With a scutter of bare legs he was

away up the road to tell the good news to the dominie or anyone else he met on the way.

Davy sat at his bench as usual, and tapped away. I asked about the telegram. "It's by ye there," he said, and pointed with his hammer. It was quite short. "Private A. Doake now in hospital, Stobhill, Glasgow, awarded Victoria Cross. Colquhoun, Colonel."

"And aren't you proud?" I asked Davy.

"Aye," he said, "I'm prood. I'm thinkin' he's been helpin' in some poor wounded body. He was always that frichtened of seein' onything hurtit."

"But maybe it was for killing this time," I said.

Next morning as I propped my paper against the coffee jug I saw that in it that sent me post haste across the street to the snobby's shop. Davy was sitting at his door-sill smoking, and the breeze brought up the smell of smoked herring and oakum and pine-logs new sawn from the little wharf.

"Listen to this," I said as I opened the paper to read. "'Private Alexander Doake'" ("That'll be Sandy," said Davy), "'—— Highlanders, Inchaffin, Ross-shire: When his company was held up in attack he went ahead through an intense barrage, killed a machine-gun crew of six men, captured the gun, and returned with it. On fire being opened from a concrete pill-box, he went forward again and threw two bombs inside. He then entered, and, finding that the enemy still resisted, attacked them with the bayonet, killing three and taking eighteen prisoners. He subsequently rescued two of our prisoners from a German patrol,

and bombed the patrol as it ran. He personally accounted for twelve of the enemy.' ”

Davy's mouth had come more and more open as I read, and when I put down the paper he could only gasp: “The Lord save us, and him that wouldna kill a hen !”

A FAKIR IN THE DESERT

IT was the man from Africa who told the story that sent us all home thinking hard, and it is better given in his own words.

“Do you remember,” he started, in the orthodox manner, “when little Macandrew was taken away from school because he was ragged? He was a rum little devil, always messing about with maps and books of travel. He was my fag for a while, and a rotten fag he was. He used to blanco my cricket-boots with my toothbrush, and clean my uniform brasses with my toothpaste. Someone put a lot of vaseline from the armory down his back one day, and he ran away and never came back. We heard afterwards that he had gone abroad with his parents, and later, that he was doing intelligence work somewhere for the Foreign Office. Well, you know I’ve been out in Abyssinia for nearly a year and spent a lot of time in Upper Egypt. After that I came down to Sollum, and chased the Senussi for some months.

“One night, at an ungodly place way out from Darfur, we were unloading the camels, and there was a prospect of a miserable, lonely evening for me, for I was the only white man in the party. I had my tent put up, and I was washing at a canvas washstand when a weird figure appeared round the corner of a

clump of palms. At least, although the figure was weird to me, the Soudanese hardly gave him a second look. He was a native, thin as a rake, and dressed in a patchwork garment like an old rag quilt. He had a pointed hat on his head made like his *galabieh*, and in his hand he carried a long rough staff shod with iron. His hair was matted and hung down over his shoulders, emphasizing his skinny neck and shoulders. He was not black, but a dark coffee colour, and his hands and face looked as if they had never been washed in years. The Soudanese corporal told me he was undoubtedly a holy man and afflicted of Allah. He certainly looked mad enough. I told Abdul, my servant, to keep a weather eye on all our loose belongings, for these holy men are often light-fingered as well as light-headed.

"The Dervish himself wandered aimlessly through the camp, and sat down opposite my tent on a mat he brought from a goat-skin bag which he carried. Then he commenced a weird incantation, and began to wave his hands about in jerky circles all the while. I sent Abdul to tell him to shut up, but he wouldn't, so I made him move farther off. He sat down again, still waving his hands in an aimless way. He was still in full view from where I sat, and I watched him in default of something better to do. Suddenly I noticed that some of his gestures were not as aimless as they looked. He postured weirdly, but every little while he repeated his movements, placing his hands and arms in the same position. Abdul, who noticed that I was watching the fellow, lingered after he had given me my coffee. 'Undoubtedly he is a very

holy man,' he said. 'He has travelled a long way, and speaks like a *habashi* (a negro), though he is not of their colour.'

"When Abdul had gone, I looked again at the *habashi* that was not black, and suddenly I saw what I had been puzzling over for some time. The gestures the man was making were semaphore signals, made with the arm bent from the elbow, with the upper arm kept flat to the side. I give you my word, I nearly jumped off my bed. Then I concentrated all my attention and tried to get the message that I knew he was sending me. He did not look up at me, but just sent four letters over and over again. I could not make sense of them, and for a while thought that I must be mistaken. Then I cursed myself for my stupidity. The first letter was the numeral sign, and the following ones were three numbers. I had a map on the bed by me, and with a pencil in my hand I pretended to be looking over it and marking our route. I took down the number, and knew from it that I was watching a colleague of my own department. Who he was I had no idea until he started sending again. This time I spelt out his name, and I'm damned if it wasn't little Macandrew! What he was doing there in that kit I couldn't think, but the idea of that little rum devil sitting like a dirty rag-bag beneath a palm-tree semaphoring to me made me wonder, I can tell you. Then, although I did not think he was looking at me, I could see that he was watching all the time. I gave him a signal at the end of every word by puffing at my cigarette, and he tumbled to it. I got all his message, and Morsed him

one with smoke-puffs. I wanted to know why I couldn't go out and talk to him, but he answered that it would be better if the men with me did not see us together at all. Then after we had had a laborious talk he made me laugh. 'Ever hear from the school?' he asked. Poor little devil! The school in its rough way had been damned unkind to him, but here he was sitting miles out in the desert, dressed as a fakir, thinking of it all the time. It was getting dusk, so I asked him if there was anything he wanted, and he said he would like some chocolate and cigarettes if I had any to spare. Golly! I planted five hundred of my best in the bole of a tree outside the camp where he could see me, and then I turned in. Mohamed and Abdul had fed the holy man, and I told them to give him plenty of food to take on his way. They were only too glad to do this, and presently little Mac ambled off across the desert, stopping on a sand-hummock to signal me a farewell message. He ended it by saying that he might see me in Cairo in two months or so, and would I come and see him if he sent for me. Then he drifted off into the sunset light, waving his staff at the hills and capering madly every few paces as he went.

I've seen him twice since then. The first time was when we were coming back after that Senussi show. We had a lot of prisoners, and a smelly bunch they were too. They had to be marched about thirteen miles to the sea, and, poor devils, they made heavy weather of it, for lots of them were wounded. There was one man with a bandage round his eyes stumbling along on the arm of a big nigger in a blue patched

jibbeh. I thought I knew the walk, and there was something that reminded me of little Mac in the figure, although he was thinner than ever. I rode alongside him for a bit and whistled the college song as quietly as I could, and with his free hand he beat time to it ever so slightly. That night on the beach I sent an escort to fetch the man I thought was Mac. I had him brought into my tent and sent the troopers outside. I started cautiously in Arabic, but it was Mac all right, and the first thing he said was, 'For God's sake let me sit down, old man!' I had him on my bed in a minute, and helped him take off the bandage from his eyes. I filled him a glass with stiff brandy and water and put it beside him.

"Put that inside you, and you'll feel better," I said.

"Give it to me, then," he said wearily. 'I'm blinder than a bat.'

"And it was a fact. He was stone-blind from the sun and the sand. When we had got the doctor for him, and he was more comfortable, he told me his story, but it is one he is going to put in a book of his own, so I cannot tell it here. There wasn't any need for secrecy now, and we had him dressed and taken to Cairo. Poor devil! he'd been with those bally prisoners for a week and couldn't let on, for any one of them would have stuck a knife into him if they had found out. It was he who upset their whole game, and—well, that's his yarn.

"I said I saw him again. So I did, last week. I went down to the school to dine with the Head, and there was little Mac. The Head had told something of his story to the boys at Big School after prayers

and when Mac arrived, he was cheered and chaired all round the quadrangle. When we got inside he only said, 'That was a rotten trick, old man. Although I can't see with my eyes, I can weep with the bally things.' Sure enough there were tears streaming down his face. Later I missed him from the study, where there was a grand cloud of tobacco and lots of old-time talk going, so I went to the common-room and found him there. You know there is a window from the changing-room that looks into the common-room? Well, Mac was inside and did not hear me. He was going over all the desks with his fingers, and I wondered what the devil he was trying to find. Then he sat down and ran his fingers over the one near the fire. I could see him grin in the half-light, and it was the happiest grin I had ever seen on his face. Do you know what he was looking for and what he had found? It was his name carved on the desk!

THE EYES OF THE BLIND

NO matter how much a man thinks he is at peace with himself and his neighbours, there inevitably arrives a time when he oversteps himself—when not a hat in his wardrobe will fit his head, and when he needs abruptly and brutally setting back in his place. I am speaking personally, for this has just happened to me. I am quite conscious in what way I offended—indeed, there were many—and the very pettiness of these offences still makes my face hot when I think of them. Even though I have been blind these five months, that is no excuse for having told the wine-waiter at the club that I would not trust him to carry a tin of sheep-dip properly, nor for contradicting poor old Watson, and churlishly refusing the cigar he offered me. These were but two of the black marks against me. There were many others, and they were not confined to my behaviour at the club. Clearly I was getting above myself. Because a man has to go through the rest of his life hooded like a falcon, that is no reason why he should prey on his fellow-beings. Then there was the incident of the blind matchseller in Piccadilly. When he implored me to buy, I explained forcibly that I also was blind, and he ought to be ashamed of himself. True enough, half a block farther on I could have bitten out my tongue for those same words,

but my good pride was not enough for me to make an honourable amend. Yes, it had to end somehow, and so it did, sooner and in a queerer way than I should ever have dreamt of.

Last night Dalrymple saw me home from the Travellers' Club, and left me at my door. I was in a bad mood, and I climbed the stairs with bitterness in my heart. Once in my room, I felt there was something strange impending. Tired as I was, I lay back in my big leather armchair and held a short commination service on the war, the world, and everyone and everything in it, more particularly the people who had still the full enjoyment of that great sense of which I had been deprived.

Presently there came a scratching knock at the door, and, in answer to my summons, surly enough, there was heard the pad-pad of footsteps into the room. They stopped. A voice spoke immediately. "Salaam, Sahib!" it said, and, continuing in Hindustani: "What are these black thoughts that throng the darkened streets of thy mind? I have been sent thee to cast them out. Stay still."

Then I felt long fingers pressing my temples, and I opened my eyes that I knew to be sightless to see before me, sitting on my largest pouffe cushion, a small, shrivelled figure in a saffron robe, a white turban, and red pointed shoes which stuck out in front of him as he clasped his knees. On the floor beside him was a large bag of soft leather, and, as I watched him, from it he pulled, first a small tripod brazier, and then a number of smaller bags. The brazier he lit with a flint and tinder, and then he spoke again.

"Sahib," he said, "you have been thinking bad thoughts, and the room of your reason needs cleansing, as does a room in which a man has sickened of plague. I have let you see in order that your fickle memory may take you back into times gone past. You know that you have had a thousand and one happinesses in your life, and it is for you to learn now that these happinesses were not given you to forget. They were not to be treated as the shadows of the puppets on the screen in the shadow-play, but rather to be treasured, and brought out again, and handed round, and gloried in, as some fine carved ivory, or beaten silver chalice. To the sane man, even though he be blinded at thy age, joys such as thou hast had should suffice for his allotted span. Therefore, taste of them again and see if this is not so."

Then from one of the little bags he drew what looked like a grey powder. This he sprinkled on the brazier, and, as I watched it, a cloud arose, and a smell reached my nostrils.

"Sniff deep. It is the scent that will awaken the memory."

I inhaled the faint smoke that drifted towards me, and out of the cloud above the brazier, and in the cloud, appeared a picture. There was an old woman kneeling beside a whitewashed hearth in a small room. The door of the room was open, and a venturing hen stood just outside the step, cocking its head first on one side and then on the other. Then it was I knew the smell, for, on the fire above the grey ashes was a girdle, and the old woman, my grandmother, was dusting the bannocks with a feather brush, and

as the flour and feathers sometimes reached the flame so came the faint odour.

On a chair to the left of the fire sat a barelegged boy of nine years, endeavouring vainly to look as if he had no expectations, either from the large jar of jelly on the white wood table or from the girdle. A little while later and this same lad was padding down the road, a fishing-rod over one shoulder, and in his right hand a large doubled bannock, the corners of which oozed red apple-jelly that needed constant attention. Somehow, in that moment of time, I lived many months. I paddled through the ripples of the river, dragging big fish from the black pools with a gaff as long as myself. I hid from Davie, the ranger, in the tall bushes; or else I met him openly, and proudly showed him an eel which I had carried all day with a view to such contingency.

"The Sahib was happy then," said the voice of the man in the saffron robe. "That memory is one that you must use again many times. Look again."

From another bag he threw a different powder on the flame. This time the odour of hot steam, scented soap, and sodden football jerseys came to me. I placed it quicker than the last, and the vision came quicker too. There was the long, top-lighted bathroom, packed with pink youth, splashing, yelling, turning on unexpected showerbaths. In the bath nearest the door were two boys larger than most of the others. No one turned on the shower above them, and, if by any chance a flying cake of soap hit one of them, immediate justice was administered, leaving a chastened small boy with red hand-prints on his

tender parboiled skin. Then the swing-door opened. There was a shrill "Cave!" and the noise stopped miraculously as a small, smiling-faced man in black stepped into the bathroom.

"What a pigstye!" he said, as he picked his way through the soapy puddles on the pitted concrete floor. "Is Norton here?" and the Head, for it was he, held out a hand to the larger of the two boys in the end bath. "I want to congratulate you on that try this afternoon," he said. "It was magnificent!"

Norton beamed through a mask of soapsuds. "It was mostly Dalrymple here, sir. I only took the ball over the line. He did all the hard work."

The Head beamed in his turn. "Then you had both better come to supper to-night," he said, as he went out.

"Three cheers for Norton and Dalrymple!" shouted a small boy injudiciously. "Bring that thing here," commanded Norton. "Now, hold its head under the water till it is drowned, and beat it with a hairbrush." But the cheers were given all the same.

The little man spoke again. "Have you any days that were happier than that?" he asked.

"No," I answered, "none. A postal order arrived that afternoon and the Head's supper was fine."

"Remember it," said the little man.

Again he burnt a powder, and, as on the last occasion, the smell went straight to my brain. It was the scent of peat-smoke among the heather, made stronger by the thin blue mist. We were riding, stirrup to stirrup, along the moorland road, the horses going as they listed. All around on the furrowed

ground plovers and peewits circling. It was once the Land of Weeping. Here, too, in the dark "killing times," the troopers hunted in their hue and cry through the moss-hags. There, where Kype Water runs brown with peat stain, it once ran red with blood. Now this is all past, and the beginning of all happiness seemed there. We rode on slowly, and, as we rode, we planned the future, for she who rode with me was to be my wife. And, when we built our airy castles, we pulled them all apart for the mere pleasure of laying stone on stone again. The horses were stopped and we were close together. A wisp of brown hair blew across my face. And then, perplexed, the horses started again, only to be checked once more. These human beings were incomprehensible to them. "They stop us with the reins," they said, "and then make noises for us to go on again. When we do, we're again pulled up."

And then I saw the big open fireplace with crackling logs, and a litter of assorted dogs lying in impossible attitudes all over the big bearskin hearthrug. Someone was sitting on the rug with her brown head against my knee.

But that was all. It stopped at that. I turned on the little dark man angrily.

"Why do you show me all that?" I asked. "It was happiness, but it is all over. The sweet has gone and left a bitter taste in my mouth."

"That is not the truth," he answered, "and you know it. No happiness ever becomes a sorrow. Think again and you will realize this."

He was right. In a blackness of heart, in mere

self-pity, I had put away the memory of those days. What matter if they had not borne the fruit I had once looked for? They would still, like those other days, make sunny memories.

"You are right," I said humbly, "and I must thank you for all you have done."

I smiled gratefully at the little brown man by the fireplace, and, as I watched, he grew dimmer and dimmer and faded away. And I heard Pearson, my man, as he bent over the fire, rearranging the logs that had fallen loose.

"Sorry I woke you, sir," he apologized, "but I thought the fire was getting a bit low-like. It's a filthy night, sir."

"It's a great night, Pearson," I said. "I shall dine here in solitary state and happiness. Warm a bottle of Pommard and I'll be dressed and down in ten minutes. I'm for a quiet happy evening at home."

And I had it.

**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

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